

SCHOLAE PALATINAE

The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire

by

R. L. FRANK

University of California, Irvine




AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME
PAPERS AND MONOGRAPHS XXIII

1969

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P R E F A C E

This work was begun as a dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, and it owes much to the inspiration and guidance of my mentor, Professor William G. Sinnigen; as another of his students happily put it, « his rare combination of enthusiasm and scholarship is a continuing challenge. » Professor A. E. Gordon generously gave of his time and learning to help me grapple with Latin epigraphy, and in particular criticized Chapter II. Professor Robert Brentano, although not previously concerned with my work, showed great kindness and integrity in intervening at the final and critical stage.

At the American Academy in Rome I enjoyed the friendship and enthusiasm of Professor Henry Rowell, and learned from him the close connection between Roman history and archaeology. This interest was confirmed and enlarged through many memorable journeys with Professors William MacDonald and Frank E. Brown, who took much trouble to share their knowledge and love of the monuments. Kenneth Pratt was the best of Fellows, always generous with interest and searching criticism.

Throughout my years of studies I have benefited greatly from the understanding and support of my wife, Anne Baldwin Frank, and she has helped in particular with matters of style and presentation.

Finally, in token of a debt too great to be expressed, I wish to dedicate this small work to my mother and to the memory of my father.

R. I. FRANK

University of California, Irvine, 1969

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient authors are cited in the forms listed in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* and in A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 284-602, vol. 3, pp. 394-406. A few basic secondary works are cited by author only. These latter abbreviations and the abbreviations used in the notes and bibliography for journals, source collections and reference works follow. The titles themselves are described more completely in the bibliography.

<i>AE</i>	= <i>Année épigraphique</i>
<i>AJA</i>	= <i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJP</i>	= <i>American Journal of Philology</i>
Babut (1)	= E.-C. Babut, « Recherches sur la Garde Impériale et sur le corps d'officiers de l'armée Romaine au IV et V siècles, » <i>Revue historique</i> 114 (1913), pp. 225-260
Babut (2)	= E.-C. Babut, "Recherches..." (continuation of above), <i>Revue historique</i> 116 (1914), pp. 225-293
<i>BCH</i>	= <i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
Boak	= A. Boak, "The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires"
Bury (1) and (2)	= J. Bury, <i>History of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 2 vols.
<i>CIL</i>	= <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>C. J.</i>	= <i>Codex Justinianus</i>
<i>C. Th.</i>	= <i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>CSHB</i>	= <i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>DACL</i>	= <i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> , ed. Dom Cabrol and Dom Leclercq

DE	= <i>Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane</i> , ed. E. De Ruggiero, et al.
Domaszewski	= A. von Domaszewski, <i>Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres</i>
DS	= <i>Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines</i> , ed. C. Daremberg and E. Saglio
FHG, ed. Mueller	= <i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i> , ed. C. Mueller
Grosse	= R. Grosse, <i>Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung</i>
HE	= Eusebius, <i>Historiae Ecclesiasticae</i>
IGR	= <i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes</i> , ed. R. Cagnat et al.
Jones (1) - (3)	= A. H. M. Jones, <i>The Later Roman Empire, 284-602</i> , 3 vols.
JRS	= <i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LCL	= <i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
MacMullen	= R. MacMullen, <i>Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire</i>
MG, AA	= <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
MG, SRM	= <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
Migne, PG	= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus... Series graeca</i> , ed. J. Migne
Migne, PL	= <i>Patrologiae cursus completus... Series latina</i> , ed. J. Migne
Mommsen, GS	= Th. Mommsen, <i>Gesammelte Schriften</i>
Mommsen, SR	= Th. Mommsen, <i>Römisches Staatsrecht</i>
Not. Dig.	= <i>Notitia Dignitatum</i> , ed. O. Seeck
NPNL, 2	= <i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> , second series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace

Procopius, <i>BG</i>	= <i>De bello Gothico</i>
Procopius, <i>BP</i>	= <i>De bello Persico</i>
Procopius, <i>BV</i>	= <i>De bello Vandalico</i>
Procopius, <i>HA</i>	= <i>Historia Arcana</i>
<i>PW</i>	= <i>Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa et al.
<i>REA</i>	= <i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>RM</i>	= <i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung</i>
Secck (1) - (6)	= O. Secck, <i>Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt</i> , 6 vols.
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
Stein (1) and (2)	= E. Stein, <i>Histoire du Bas-Empire</i> , 2 vols.
Thompson	= E. A. Thompson, <i>The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus</i>

INTRODUCTION

Study of the *scholae palatinae* began fairly recently. When the sixth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* was being prepared at the end of the nineteenth century, so little was known about the subject that inscriptions of *scholares* were printed under the rubric *scholastici* along with inscriptions relating to teachers of grammar and rhetoric.¹ Soon after, however, a real start was made by Camille Jullian with an excellent monograph published in 1883 which examined the corps of *protectores*.² Jullian regarded the *protectores* as imperial bodyguards and the successors of the *equites singulares*, and did not discuss the *scholares* or the *scholae palatinae* in general. Soon after, Theodore Mommsen published a collection of inscriptions relating to the *protectores* which showed that many of them served in provincial armies far from court.³ Later he took up the *scholae* themselves in connection with a survey of the armed forces of the Later Empire, and in a few pages gave the major facts to be found in Ammianus, Procopius and the Codes, without attempting to give any detailed picture of the development of the corps or the problems connected with the relation between the *protectores*, *scholae palatinae* and the regular army.⁴ This earlier work was summed up by Maurice Besnier with

¹ CIL VI, Suppl. 4, ed. Ch. Huelsen (Berlin, 1902), pp. 3403-3404: "scholastici."

² C. Jullian, *De protectoribus et domesticis Augustorum* (Paris, 1883).

³ Th. Mommsen, "Protectores Augusti," *Ephemeris Epigraphica* 5 (1884), pp. 121-141 = GS 8, pp. 419-446.

⁴ Th. Mommsen, "Das römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian," *Hermes* 24 (1889), pp. 195-279 (esp. pp. 222-225) = GS 6, pp. 206-283.

additional references to related graphic representations,⁵ and continued to form the basis of the accounts given by Robert Grosse,⁶ Otto Seeck,⁷ and Arthur Boak.⁸ All these accounts included much evidence, but treated it all together with little regard for historical development. The dangers of this approach are apparent, for example, in the work of Besnier; he evidently considered the shift from *scholares* to *excubitores* as merely a change in nomenclature: « the corps of guards no doubt then officially took the new title of *excubitores*, and at the same time their commanders ceased to be called *comites domesticorum* and became instead *domestici excubitorum*. »⁹ The most significant general conclusion reached by this group of scholars was that the *scholae palatinae* constituted a sort of military academy for the training of officers, a *Pflanzschule für das Offizierkorps*.¹⁰ In the present study, however, it is argued that the primary mission of members of the *scholae* was rather to serve the emperor personally, not only to guard him and to assist in court ceremonies but also to serve as agents of imperial control in the provinces and in army headquarters. Some officers of the *scholae* did in fact go on to army commands, but our evidence on this practice is far too scanty to support any generalizations. What our evidence does indicate clearly is that the functions of seconded members of the palatine corps were primarily staff rather than

⁵ M. Besnier, "Protectores," *DS*, vol. 4.1 (n.d.), pp. 709-713.

⁶ Grosse, pp. 138-140.

⁷ O. Seeck, "Scholae Palatinae," *PW* 2A (1923), coll. 621-624. Seeck might have taken up the problems raised by the subject if he had written the article on *protectores domestici* promised in 1905; cf. O. Seeck, "Domesticus no. 2," *ibid.*, vol. 5 (1905), col. 1299. However, that article was evidently not written, and nothing appears for that entry in the appropriate volume of Pauly-Wissowa or in the supplements issued up to now.

⁸ Boak, esp. pp. 23, 60-63.

⁹ Besnier, *op. cit.*, p. 713.

¹⁰ Grosse, p. 95.

command. The promotion of officers to army commands may well have been the exception rather than the rule.

A new approach was begun by E. Babut with two articles published in 1913-1914, in which close attention was paid to historical development.¹¹ In particular Babut established the relationship between *protectores domestici* and *scholares*, proved the creation of a separate corps of *protectores* at the end of the fourth century, and indicated the significance of the protectorate as a preparation for high commands. Babut's work was an outstanding contribution to military history but for several years it was not widely known, presumably because of wartime conditions, and so was not used by Boak, Grosse or Seeck in the studies cited above. However, soon after it was accepted as fundamental, and forms the basis for discussions of the guards in the histories of James Bury,¹² Ernst Stein,¹³ and A. H. M. Jones.¹⁴

Babut's major thesis was that the title of *protector* had been extended to various groups during the fourth century, including all centurions in the field and frontier armies, and so the *protectores* took the place of the centurions: « L'important est de savoir que le centurionat subsistait. Le Bas Empire a opposé aux Barbares de véritables armées, et non des troupeaux de soldats. »¹⁵ In arguing this thesis he passed over many matters related to the *scholae palatinae*. Hence the present work takes up, it may be said, where Babut stopped.

Furthermore, Babut's thesis itself seems open to question. It has been accepted by Stein,¹⁶ and Jones cites Stein

¹¹ Babut (1) and (2).

¹² Bury (1), pp. 37-38.

¹³ Stein (1), pp. 57-58, 122-123, 240-241.

¹⁴ Jones (1), pp. 53-54; (2), pp. 613-614, 636-640.

¹⁵ Babut (2), p. 293.

¹⁶ Stein (1), pp. 57-58. Certain reservations were advanced by Stein (1), pp. 426-427, n. 186, but he withdrew them later in a brief note: (2),

on the *protectores* without comment. In his own discussion of field army units, however, Jones ignores the theory entirely and then gives his own explanation of the use of *protectores* in the field.¹⁷ Jones' view seems to me to give the basis for a true understanding of the situation, and much of the present work illustrates and supplements his brief discussion.

* * *

The ten chapters of this work fall into three parts. Chapters I and II discuss the background against which the *scholae palatinae* are to be placed, in particular the militarization of the imperial court. The ideas suggested here are supported by a more general study recently published by Ramsay Mac Mullen which describes the predominance of the military in many other aspects of imperial society.¹⁸

Chapters III-VIII are concerned with the *scholae palatinae* as a military organization, and examine their formation, recruitment, officers, duties, elite units and role in imperial ceremonies. Many of the ideas discussed here on the role of the *scholae* as a sort of general staff were first suggested in a short article by Guido Gigli.¹⁹ He gave very little evidence to support his views (mainly a few references to Ammianus), contenting himself instead with comparisons between members of the *scholae* and the general staffs of Sweden, France and Prussia.

These chapters on the institutional aspects of the *scholae* focus on the fourth century, and in particular on the years

p. 429, n. 1 (the reference in this note to vol. 1, p. 82, is to the page number of the German edition of vol. 1).

¹⁷ Jones (3), p. 6, n. 31 (citation of Stein); (2), p. 634 (field army units); (2), p. 636, and (3), pp. 195-196, n. 64 (*protectores*).

¹⁸ See Table of Abbreviations s.v. MacMullen.

¹⁹ G. Gigli, "I Protectores e i domestici nel IV secolo," *Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti Morali*, series 8, vol. 4 (1949), pp. 383-390.

A.D. 325-395, for which we have relatively ample documentation. Earlier accounts have treated the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries as a unit. The defect of this approach is that it ignores the changes in the Empire and changes in the role and organization of the *scholae*, changes which were of great significance, as one might expect when so long a period of time is involved. Furthermore, the literary and epigraphic evidence becomes much more scanty after 395. For these reasons most of Chapters III-VIII is based on evidence from the fourth century. The major exception is the subject of ceremonies and the Great Palace, for which most of our evidence dates from the reign of Justinian and his successors. Considering the conservatism of the Later Empire in such matters, it seems legitimate to posit continuity here and to use the later evidence.

The last two chapters attempt to place the *scholae* in the framework of general history. Chapter IX discusses the role of the corps in the Empire from 360-395, and then from 395 to 540 in the Western Empire. Its main theme is the formation of a new aristocracy based on the military elite. Chapter X takes up the historical development in the East down to the end of Justinian's reign. It is mainly concerned with the reforms in the East which succeeded in checking barbarian domination of the Empire's armed forces.

Throughout the work *scholae palatinae* is taken to include the *protectores*, *domestici* and *protectores domestici* as well as the *scholae* of *scutarii*, *clibanarii* and *gentiles*. At times the general term « corps » is used instead. This reflects a premise of the work, that the various military organizations attached to the imperial court must be considered together and in relation to each other.

Chapter I

IMPERIAL PALACES

From about A.D. 200 onwards, a series of changes transformed the Roman world. Politically this meant the development of centralization and absolutism. Local institutions steadily lost ground to the authorities in Rome, and at Rome power was concentrated in the emperor's hands. During the previous two centuries the emperor (*princeps*) had shared authority, in form at least, with the Senate and the aristocracy which it represented. The official theory was maintained that the Republic had been restored and that the *princeps* was no more than the chief civilian magistrate. From the reign of Septimius Severus, however, the Republican façade could no longer be maintained. Severus instituted a number of policies which collectively meant « a shift from the civil to the military aspect of the empire, from the goodwill of the Senate to that of the troops as the basis of power. »¹

New forms and symbols were created to fit the new realities. Innovation proceeded from two sources, the monarchical traditions of the East and Roman military traditions. Hellenistic monarchy's forms and symbols had attracted Roman leaders at least as early as Scipio Africanus, and continued to do so throughout the Principate. Severus held court under a ceiling adorned with astral symbols, reintroduced *proskynesis*, and had himself portrayed as a new Serapis, the

¹ M. Hammond, *The Antonine Monarchy* (Rome, 1959), p. 173; the transitional character of Severus' reign was shown by Mommsen, *SR* 2.2, pp. 762-763, 848.

clearest possible link with « the ruler theology kept alive by the great royal tradition of the Ptolemies. » Semi-divine honors continued to be accorded the emperors throughout the third century, culminating under the Tetrarchy. Diocletian and his colleagues presented themselves to their subjects as divine, their persons and palaces as sacred, and their joint birthday was celebrated by the Empire as an epiphany. « No Ptolemy had demanded more. » ²

Much more important for the development of Roman absolutism, however, was the emperor's position as supreme commander of the Roman armies. Even under the Principate the emperor's military position had been the keystone of the whole system. Mommsen stressed the central importance of this factor as follows: « Throughout the whole Empire all troops, without distinction as to post or mission, swore the oath of obedience to the Princeps and obeyed him as their legitimate commander in chief; this was the actual foundation of the Principate. » ³

Military command was legitimized by possession of the proconsular *imperium*, which gave the *princeps* supreme command over all forces and provinces outside Italy, whereas in Italy and Rome a greater respect for Republican traditions required civilian dress and more indirect rule. Here again the reign of Severus marks a turning point, for it was he who first used the title proconsul in Italy, and first wore military

² See H. L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture* (Oslo, 1947), pp. 83-85, on Severus' palace and portraits, and W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* (Paris, 1946), pp. 211-230, based largely on *Pan.* II, on the Tetrarchy. Alföldi, "Insignien...", pp. 43-68, discusses *proskynesis* fully; though he finds a few possible Roman antecedents, it is clearly regarded as oriental in origin by our sources. For its general significance as a symbol of despotism, see K. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 152-154.

³ Mommsen, *SR* 2.2, p. 848.

dress within Rome itself, a clear evidence of the military monarchy which he established.⁴

Soldiers played a leading role in the regime of Severus and his successors. They generally chose the emperor, leaving to the Senate only the right of formalizing their choice. Indeed, the oldest part of the imperial coronation ceremony known to us consisted in crowning an emperor-elect with a military decoration, a *torques*, which signified that the generals had judged him worthy to rule. Not surprisingly, emperors so chosen tended to rely on their comrades in arms for dependable associates and subordinates, and during the third century the imperial bureaucracy was gradually reorganized on military lines and staffed with military personnel.⁵

* * *

Among the new forms created by the militarized monarchy was a new form of palace which appeared at the end of the third century. It was directly inspired by Roman military architecture, and symbolizes the shift away from the traditions of the Principate.

Augustus' residence, the first palace of the Principate, was evidently what is now called the House of Livia. This was hardly more than a patrician *domus* of the traditional peristyle type, consisting of a number of rooms giving on to a porticoed court. When Tiberius and Domitian built new palaces, they too followed this traditional form, except that

⁴ Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-38, 89; cf. M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957), p. 404: "The principate of Augustus was completely militarized by Septimius, emphasis was laid on the title *imperator*, chief of the Roman army..."

⁵ Eutropius 9.11 describes the creation of an emperor: *a militibus electus, a senatu appellatus Augustus*. For the *torques*-coronation see O. Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (Jena, 1938), pp. 20-22. Militarization of the bureaucracy is discussed by MacMullen, pp. 65-71.

their palaces also had porticoed façades. Thus the three Palatine palaces—the Domus Tiberiana, Flavia and Augustana—were essentially similar to hundreds of aristocratic residences scattered over the Empire. « The most grandiose examples of the peristyle type in antiquity were the palaces on the Palatine. » ⁶

The other palaces of the Principate did not establish new forms, at least not in palace architecture. Nero's Domus Transitoria and Domus Aurea were villas rather than palaces, *rus in urbe*. Hadrian's great Tivoli Villa was « a series of architectural reminiscences. » ⁷

Only in the third century does the new palace-form of the Later Empire appear. Elements of the new form appear in the reception suites of the palaces of Philip the Arab and Shebba and Shakka, and in the rear section of the Palace of the Dux at Dura-Europus. Then at the end of the third century Diocletian and his colleagues built a series of palaces which in complexity, plan and particular elements were radically new. « An immense abyss separates these palaces from the Palatine; the ancient world has disappeared and the Middle Ages have begun. » ⁸

⁶ K. Swoboda, "Palazzi antichi e medioevali," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi per la Storia dell'Architettura* 11 (1957), pp. 1-32, v. p. 6.

This article summarizes and revises the thesis of Swoboda's major work on the subject, *Römische und Romanische Paläste*, ed. 2 (Vienna, 1924).

For Domitian's palace see M. Petrucci, "La Domus Flavia," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi per la Storia dell'Architettura* 16 (1960), pp. 57-75, especially pp. 57-60 on its similarity to aristocratic peristyle mansions. W. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 71-72, disagrees with this, stressing rather, pp. 55-56, the influence of religious architecture. In any case, military models are not involved.

⁷ A. Boëthius, *The Golden House of Nero* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 105 (Domus Aurea); L. Crema, *L'Architettura romana* (Rome, 1959), p. 483 (Hadrian's Villa).

⁸ M. Cagiano de Azevedo, "Admiranda Palatia," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi per la Storia dell'Architettura* 14 (1959), pp. 3-15, v. p. 15. For Philip's palaces see H. Butler, *Architecture and Other Arts* (New York, 1903), pp. 369-

Chance has preserved one of these palaces largely intact, the palace built by Diocletian for his retirement at Spalato. Its outstanding architectural characteristic is that it represents a fusion of elements drawn from both civil and military architecture. The southern part of the palace, with its arcaded façade looking out over the sea, is reminiscent of the dominant villa type of the period. The rest of the palace, however, is unmistakably derived from the design of a *castra stativa*, the Roman army's permanent camp. This is made apparent by the palace's two main axes which divide it into quarters, by its surrounding walls with military gates and towers, and by its colonnaded passageway. Certain details are even more explicitly military, such as the main gate with its iron portcullis, and the fact that the palace has not only the equivalents of the *via praetoria* and *via principalis* of a *castrum*, but also the *via quintana* as well. Equally significant is the palace's marked similarity to forts with a purely military function which were built elsewhere under Diocletian, notably the great fortress at Palmyra.⁹

Diocletian's palace cannot be considered exceptional or unrepresentative. What we know of other Later Empire palaces indicates that they had similar features, e.g., colonnaded streets and a grand peristyle at Salonika, division into quarters on the *castrum* plan at Antioch, and basilical throne room with peristyle at Ravenna, Constantinople and Apollonia.

375 (Shakka) and pp. 382-384 (Shebba); cf. Crema, *op. cit.*, p. 520 and p. 619. For the Palace of the Dux see M. Rostovtzeff, *The Excavations at Dura-Europus: Preliminary Report of the Ninth Season of Work*, part 3 (New Haven, 1952), pp. 71-83.

⁹ K. Swoboda, *Römische und Romanische Paläste*, 2nd ed. (Vienna, 1924), pp. 148-160, and F. Bulic, *Kaiser Diokletians Palast in Split* (Zagreb, 1929), pp. 25-26, describe the relation of the palace to military architecture; F. Weilbach, "Zur Rekonstruktion des Diokletians Palastes," *Strena Buliciana* (Zagreb, 1924), pp. 119-126, describes the *via quintana*. W. Schleiermacher, *Gnomon* 14 (1938), p. 334, compares the palace with the fortress at Palmyra. See MacMullen, pp. 42-48, on the general relation between military and civil architecture.

Diocletian's palace is therefore representative of a type which dominated Roman palatine architecture from the third through the sixth centuries.¹⁰

Furthermore, the dominance of this new form of palace was part of a general trend in the Later Empire. Hans L'Orange has concluded: « Such a fusion of *castrum* into the architecture of the imperial palace is in strict accord with the militarization of state and administration—indeed, of the whole style of life—which took place during the third century. »¹¹ Nobles lived on their estates in fortified villas which resembled *castra* in many features. Ausonius and Sidonius have described two of these, and archeology has revealed the existence of many more. Military influences also shaped the symbol of imperial authority used from Diocletian on, a towered façade with arcade which a modern scholar has called the « *castrum-palatium* concept of the seat of government. »¹²

* * *

Along with this militarization of palace architecture went militarization of the staff attached to the palace. For this, too, there were numerous precedents. The *princeps* had been

¹⁰ For parallels see E. Dyggve, "La Région palatiale de Thessalonique," *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Classical Studies*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen, 1958), pp. 353-365 (Salonica); G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 643-644 (Antioch); D. Talbot Rice, ed., *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors: Second Report* (Edinburgh, 1958), pp. 24-51 and p. 163, n. 3 (Constantinople and Ravenna); R. Goodchild, "A Byzantine Palace at Apollonia (Cyrenaica)," *Antiquity* 34 (1960), pp. 246-258, especially p. 249 (Apollonia).

¹¹ H. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Empire* (Princeton, 1965), p. 73.

¹² H. Baldwin Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1956), p. 55; see pp. 52-73 for the general identification of the imperial palace with a *castrum*. Individual villas are described by Ausonius, *Mosella* 318-334; Sidonius, *carmen* 22; E. Dyggve, "Mogorillo," *Akten des XI Byzantinistenkongresses* (Munich, 1960), pp. 130-137. General conclusions are given by R. Paribeni, "Le Dimore dei Potentiores nel Basso Impero," *RM* 55 (1940), pp. 131-148, and MacMullen, pp. 141-151.

from the first commander in chief of the armed forces, and very early in the Principate it became accepted that he had his military headquarters (*praetorium*) in the palace. The chief officer in charge of this headquarters, the praetorian prefect, played an important role as chief of staff to the emperor and commander of the palace guard. There was also a staff of « orderlies » (*castrensi*) attached to the palace under its own commander, the *procurator castrensis*, and this corps continued relatively unchanged under the Later Empire, a good example of continuity. There was, nevertheless, a difference: under the Principate aristocratic and Republican traditions had continued to shape a large part of the palatine establishment; in the third and fourth centuries this ceased, giving way to military organization and military personnel.¹³

It is within this context that one must place the appearance of the *scholae palatinae*, one of a number of corps organized on military lines as *scholae* which were attached to the palatine establishment. The name itself was an innovation in administrative nomenclature, for previously *schola* had been used as an architectural term for a type of small room with benches. As such it was used for school-rooms, library reading rooms, and dressing rooms in the baths. Then the term was used for small rooms in the headquarters building of a legion, the *principia*. Originally these military *scholae* were used as orderly rooms and were therefore situated near the officers' quarters in the *principia*. When officers'

¹³ O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diocletian*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1904), pp. 312-317, and W. Ensslin, "Praefectus Praetorio," *PW* 22 (1954), coll. 2407-2419, discuss the emperor's *praetorium*. J. Dunlap, *The Office of the Grand Chamberlain in the Later Roman and Byzantine Emperors* (New York, 1924), pp. 207-216, traces the history of the *castrensi*. Persistence of Republican traditions is stressed by Hammond, *op. cit.*, especially in his discussion of Republican magistracies on pp. 288-300. For a detailed study of the persistence of a particular Republican institution see J. Crook, *Consilium Principis* (Cambridge, Eng., 1955).

quarters were moved elsewhere the *scholae* in the *principia* ceased to be orderly rooms and were used for various administrative and security purposes. Then in the early third century several of them in each legionary *principia* were turned over to the NCO clubs (*collegia*) then being formed under imperial patronage.

An example of third-century practice is provided by the *principia* of *Legio III Augusta* at Lambaesis. Of the six *scholae* in the *principia* whose use is known to us, one served as a chapel of the standards, two were used by administrative personnel, and three were assigned to *collegia*. One *collegium* was composed of the legion's cavalry detachment, which served as the general's guard; the second was composed of the noncommissioned officers assigned to the general's staff; and the third was composed of the noncommissioned officers assigned to the tribune's staff. Thus the various staff groups were organized separately in their own clubs, and, as befitted their special relation to the officers, they had their clubrooms in the legion's headquarters building. Very soon these particular *collegia* came to be called by the name of the type of room they used, *schola*.¹⁴

This was the precedent which inspired the new use of *schola* in the Later Empire palace. Just as the emperor's palace had come to be modeled on a general's *castrum*, so his staff was organized like a general's, in *scholae*. The term extended to all groups serving the emperor personally so that

¹⁴ R. Cagnat, *DS* 4.2 (n.d.), pp. 1120-1122, and A. Hug, "Schola," *PW* 2A (1923), coll. 618-621, on *schola* as an architectural term. Hyginus, *De munitionibus castrorum* 20, defines its military use: *Scholae cohortibus primis ubi munera legionum dicuntur in scamno legatorum contra aquilam dari debent*. The *collegia* at Lambaesis are described by R. Besnier, "Les Scholae des Sous-Officiers dans le camp Romain de Lambèse," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 19 (1899), pp. 199-258; more recent scholarly discussions based on new evidence which confirms Besnier's conclusions are summarized in G. Alföldy, "Collegium-Organisationen in Intercisa," *Acta Antiqua* 6 (1958), pp. 177-198.

even the men assigned to the imperial wardrobe were organized in a *schola vestis sacrae*. Thus the appearance of the imperial *scholae* is intimately connected with the centralization and militarization of the regime and the consequent reorganization of the emperor's staff.¹⁵

The two outstanding characteristics of the new regime—centralization and militarization—affected the *scholae*. Centralization meant that members of the emperor's staff shared indirectly in his absolute power, and so service in the various palatine corps came to be a most desirable career. Probably all members of *scholae* enjoyed noncommissioned status on enrollment, since the *scholae* of the camps had been barred to enlisted men. As a result even menial service in the palace was highly prized, and large sums were paid for the privilege of entering the *schola* which staffed the palace with butlers, barbers and ushers. This was a great difference from conditions under the Principate, when such positions as well as many others of far greater importance had been filled by slaves and freedmen. Service in the provinces, on the other hand, declined steadily in rewards and prestige.¹⁶

Militarization meant that the military became more and more preponderant, and this tendency appeared earliest in the palatine services. Military personnel were closer to the sources of power and prestige than were civilians, and were more useful as agents of control. Hence the importance of the

¹⁵ Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 219, discusses the *schola vestis sacrae*.

¹⁶ Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-454, traces the origins of palace government back to the *Principate*; the central role of the palace in the Later Empire is described by L. Homo, *Roman Political Institutions*, tr. M. Dobie, 2nd ed. (London, 1962), pp. 282-290. Jones (2), p. 571, shows the prestige of palace butlers, barbers, and ushers, and discusses the superiority of palatine to provincial posts on pp. 594-595. Babut (1), p. 259, n. 2, notes the probable privileges of members of the *scholae*.

emperor's guards, the *scholae palatinae*, and the wide range of functions assigned to them.¹⁷

These general aspects of late imperial government lend special significance to the study of the palatine corps and, in particular, the *scholae palatinae*.

¹⁷ For the increasing preponderance of the military see MacMullen, pp. 73-76, and Thompson, pp. 73-78.

Chapter II

IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS TROOPS

Since the emperor's palace was from the first his *praetorium*, his official headquarters as commander in chief of the Empire's armed forces, it was always provided with a detachment of troops for purposes of security and ceremony. This privilege had always been accorded to generals as appropriate to their dignity and office. Conservative as ever, the Romans organized the imperial headquarters troops on precedents established under the Republic, and they clung to these precedents throughout the Principate. It is to this background that we must turn in order to define what was traditional and what was novel in the character of the *scholae palatinae*.

* * *

Polybius, writing sometime between 146 and 120 B.C.,¹ described in detail the arrangements of a Roman camp. This is what he says concerning the troops stationed near the commander's *praetorium*:²

Behind the last tent of the tribunes on either side and more or less at right angles to the tents, are the quarters of the cavalry picked out from the

¹ F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 292-297.

² Polybius 6.31. The translation is that of W. Paton, *The Histories of Polybius*, vol. 3 (London and New York, 1923), p. 337, except for the change noted below. Cf. A. Passerini, *Le coorti pretorie* (Rome, 1939), pp. 17-20.

extraordinarii and a certain number of volunteers serving to oblige the consuls.... As a rule these troops are not only thus encamped near the consuls but on the march and on other occasions are in constant attendance on the consul and quaestor. Back to back with them, and looking towards the *agger*, are the select infantry who perform nearly the same service³ as the cavalry just described.

Excavations at the site of Fulvius Nobilior's camp in Spain, laid out in 153 B.C., have confirmed the accuracy of this description. Schulten estimated that in Nobilior's camp there were quarters for 720 select infantry (*pedites delecti*) and 50 select cavalry (*equites delecti*).⁴ Very likely only the select cavalry were in constant attendance on the commander as his personal bodyguard.⁵

But these were not the only troops assigned to the commander's service. Every day one of the legion's maniples took its turn in mounting guard around the consul's *praetorium* « to protect him from plots and at the same time add splendor to the dignity of his office. »⁶ The force of the last clause can be better appreciated when we remember that a manipule consisted of 100 men; a guard of only 8 men sufficed for a tribune.⁷

There were then two separate detachments assigned to the commander's *praetorium*. One was a small corps of cavalry in constant attendance on the commander himself; the other was a larger body of infantry, serving for a day in

³ Paton has "the same service," but "nearly the same service" is a more precise rendering of τὴν παραπλήσιον χρείαν and affects the argument. Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20, deduces from this passage that only the select cavalry were in constant attendance on the consul.

⁴ A. Schulten, *Numantia* (4 vols., Munich, 1914-1929), vol. 4, pp. 101-108.

⁵ Passerini, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁶ Polybius 6.33.12; translation of W. Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

⁷ Polybius 6.33.7.

rotation as a headquarters guard, and normally used more for purposes of ceremony than security. The two bodies had different missions, and this is made explicit in Polybius' account: the select cavalry are always « in constant attendance on (literally: « around ») the consul and quaestor » (VI.31.3. περὶ τὸν ὑπάτον καὶ τὸν ταμίαν), while the maniples on duty « keep watch near the general » (VI.33.12. τῷ στρατηγῷ παρακοιτεῖ). In Roman terms the select cavalry were *custodes corporis*, bodyguards,⁸ while the maniples on duty formed a sentry watch, *excubiae*.⁹ Cicero expresses this distinction clearly: « Only through your safety, Gaius Caesar, can there be any safety for ourselves. We therefore urge you to look to your safety, and we promise you not only sentinels and bodyguards (*excubias et custodias*)... »¹⁰

This distinction between the two types of guards became sharper during the last century of the Republic. The rotating *excubiae* developed into the praetorian cohort, a permanent elite corps.¹¹ Then in the civil wars the great generals each enlisted several praetorian cohorts, and these served as the core of their forces. Thus, after the death of Caesar, Antony

⁸ Festus, ed. W. Lindsay (*Glossaria Latina*, vol. 4, Paris, 1930), p. 479: *stipatores, id est custodes cuiusque corporis*...

⁹ Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. παρακοιτέω: "pro Excubo." Cf. Fiebiger, "Excubiae," *PW* 6 (1909), coll. 1576-1577.

¹⁰ Cicero, *Pro Marcello* 10. The distinction made here and elsewhere has not been noticed in earlier discussions of guards under the Republic: Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 1-16; Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-29; M. Durry, *Les cohortes prétoriennes* (Paris, 1938), pp. 71-74. All are concerned rather with the relation between *cohors praetoria* and *cohors amicorum*.

¹¹ Festus, *op. cit.*, p. 249, states that the first praetorian cohort was formed by Scipio Africanus. This raises a problem: which Scipio is meant? Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 1-5, argues for Scipio the Younger; Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7, for Scipio the Elder; Durry, *op. cit.*, p. 71 (and more recently in "Praetoriae Cohortes," *PW* 22 [1954], col. 1612), finds the problem insoluble. Mommsen's argument seems the most convincing because it explains why Polybius did not know of the existence of a permanent praetorian cohort, which evidently had not yet become part of the regular military organization when he was writing.

formed 6,000 centurions into praetorian cohorts, and after Philippi he and Augustus each enrolled 4,000 veterans in their praetorian cohorts.¹²

At the same time the units assigned to the *custodia corporis* of generals assumed a new and quite distinct character. Dynasts learned to surround themselves with bodies of loyal retainers, often foreign mercenaries, who were bound to them by ties of personal loyalty and dependence. Scipio the Younger, for example, left for his Spanish command in 134 B.C. attended by a « cohort of friends and clients. »¹³ Marius had a guard of Illyrians, Caesar's was composed of Spaniards, and Decimus Brutus' of Celts.¹⁴

In short, by the end of the Republic there were two types of guards units. One was the personal guard of the commander, attached to his service as part of his staff; the other was under his command but was less a guards unit than what we call a « crack regiment. » Caesar makes this distinction clear at one point: « Petreius was not daunted. He armed his staff and made a sudden attack on the rampart with this, with his praetorian cohort of light armed troops, and with the few barbarian horsemen whom he kept on his staff for a bodyguard (*beneficiariis suis, quos custodiae causa habere consuerat*). »¹⁵

* * *

These military institutions of the Republic continued to exist under the Principate. As noted above, the emperor's palace was in many respects a general's *praetorium*, and in line with this several troop detachments were from the first

¹² Appian, *B. Civ.* 3.40; 5.3; cf. Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-77.

¹³ Appian, *Hisp.* 84; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 2-5; Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-10.

¹⁴ Appian, *B. Civ.* 1.70-71; 1.100, 165. Suetonius, *Iulius* 86; Appian, *B. Civ.* 3.97.

¹⁵ Caesar, *B. Civ.* 1.75.

attached to the palace. Such troops were under the direct command of the emperor himself and formed his personal military establishment. The emperor gave the daily password, made promotions and issued discharges. This personal link is clearly expressed in the diplomas of honorable discharge issued to praetorians; the imperial name is followed by a formula beginning: « The names of the soldiers who have served in my *praetorium* (*in praetorio meo*)... »¹⁶

Three organizations formed the core of the emperor's command as constituted by Augustus: the praetorian cohorts, the Batavians and the *evocati*. In nomenclature, duties and character these units continued Republican traditions; in this respect the *princeps* remained a Roman general, surrounded by his headquarters troops. This continuity is most obviously attested by the very name of the praetorian cohorts, and again by the fact that Augustus kept on his staff the *evocati* whom he had recruited for the Actium campaign.¹⁷

Because of this continuity, and because of what we know of Republican precedents, we can interpret the evidence regarding the organization of the Early Empire *praetorium* with more assurance. In particular, we can say that the duties of the main units were as follows: the *evocati* served as specialists and staff personnel;¹⁸ the praetorians served as « household troops, » crack regiments for the defense of the capital and the court; and the Batavians guarded the palace. The point to be noted here is that the palace guards of the Early Empire were not the praetorians but rather the Batavians

¹⁶ *CIL* XVI, diplomas 21, 95, 98, 114; on the diplomas see Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-214; Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-293; the meaning of *in praetorio* was "to serve directly under the general"; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 128.

¹⁷ Dio Cassius 55.24, 5-8; cf. Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-40, who discusses the various palace troop units as parts of "the garrison of Rome," without any reference to the Republican precedents for headquarters troops.

¹⁸ J. Schmidt, "Die Evocati," *Hermes* 14 (1879), pp. 321-353; cf. Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-126.

(also called *corporis custodes*) and then the units that took their place. The praetorians provided *excubiae*; the Batavians were the *custodes*.¹⁹

We get a clear picture of the difference in roles from Tacitus' description of the events following Claudius' death.

... the requisite measures were arranged for securing the accession of Nero. In the first place, Agrippina, heart-broken apparently and seeking to be comforted, held Britannicus to her breast, styled him the authentic portrait of his father, and, by this or the other device, precluded him from leaving his room. His sisters, Antonia and Octavia, she similarly detained. She had barred all avenues of approach with pickets (*custodiis*), and ever and anon she issued notices that the emperor's indisposition was turning favorably, all to keep the troops [*miles*: i.e., the praetorians] in good hope, and to allow time for the advent of the auspicious moment insisted upon by the astrologers. At last, at midday, on the thirteenth of October, the palace gates swung suddenly open, and Nero, with Burrus in attendance, passed out to the cohort, always on guard in conformity with the rules of the service (*quae more militiae excubiis adest*). There, at a hint from the prefect, he was greeted with cheers and placed in a litter Nero was carried into the camp; and, after a few introductory words suited to the time, promised a donative on the same generous scale as that of his father, and was saluted as *Imperator*.

¹⁹ This basic distinction in mission has been stressed only by C. Jullian, *De Protectoribus et Domesticis Augustorum* (Paris, 1883), pp. 1-2, but is implied by Mommsen's different terms for the praetorians (*Besatzung*) and Batavians (*Leibwächter*); cf. GS 6, p. 12 and p. 17.

The verdict of the troops (*militum*) was followed by senatorial decrees; nor was any hesitation evinced in the provinces.²⁰

There is a clear distinction here between the praetorians and the palace guards. The praetorians are *milites*, the guards are *custodes*; the praetorians have their stations outside the palace (*excubiae*), while the guards are within. And, above all, the praetorians are immeasurably more important; their support is the crucial factor in Agrippina's plans, they receive the large donative, and their acclamation suffices to make Nero the new emperor.

In fact, the praetorians constituted not a palace guard but a reserve army. They were armed and organized as heavy infantry, and on a number of occasions were used as an expeditionary force. In several crucial battles they were thrown into action at the crucial moment and won the day. The praetorians formed part of the state's armed forces, with the mission of guarding the capital. In short, their primary mission was not to guard the monarch's person and palace, and they cannot properly be called palace guards.²¹

If, therefore, we wish to find the Early Empire antecedents of the *scholae palatinae*, we must turn not to the praetorians but to the Batavians and their successors.

²⁰ Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.68-69, translation of J. Jackson, vol. 3 of *LCL* edition (4 vols., London and Cambridge, Mass., 1925-1937), pp. 415, 417.

²¹ C. Jullian, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2, first suggested this view, but without citing supporting evidence; Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 133, 191-203, has argued at length for this thesis, as against the older view as stated by Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-301. Passerini's view has recently been supported by the discovery of an inscription commemorating a praetorian topographer (*chorographiarius*), a specialist whose services would only be required by a unit with a thoroughly military mission. Cf. B. Tamaro, "L'iscrizione di un pretorio veronese," *Epigraphica* 7 (1945), pp. 35-38. Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-177, stresses the public rather than the private duties of the praetorians: they provided "military escort... sentries for the palace and police details for public spectacles."



Augustus recruited his mounted bodyguard mainly from the Batavians, because of their equestrian abilities. Later the guard was called *Germani* or *corporis custodes*. It lasted throughout the Julio-Claudian period; then with the death of Nero and the end of the dynasty it was dissolved.²²

An important characteristic of the corps was its private, unofficial character. That is, in organization and status the corps was part of the monarch's household rather than a component of the Empire's military establishment. This was in line with the distinction maintained under the Principate between servants of the emperor and officials of the state. Tiberius stressed this before the Senate on one recorded occasion: « The soldiers (i.e., *milites*) do not belong to me but to the state. »²³

At first, indeed, the *custodes* were servants in the fullest sense, for the original members of the corps seem to have been all slaves. Later some *custodes* received the status of freedmen, others were enrolled as free peregrines; but at no time could the *custodes* be called *milites*, i.e., soldiers of the state. They remained a private, dependent body, and as such had a separate and inferior status. Roman writers carefully distinguish between *milites* and *custodes*: e.g. *excubias militares... et Germanos; pedites equitesque permixti Germanis; abducta militum et Germanorum statione*.²⁴ In each of these, it will be noted, we see detachments from the two corps used together; no doubt each had its particular function just as

²² Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 17-19; R. Paribeni, "Dei Germani corporis custodes," *RM* 20 (1905), pp. 321-329; M. Bang, *Die Germanen in römischen Dienst* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 63-75.

²³ Dio Cassius, 57.8; cf. Mommsen, *SR* 2.2, pp. 761-762, 836-837.

²⁴ Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.18; 15.58; Suetonius, *Nero* 34; cf. Paribeni, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-325, correcting Bang, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-75.

during the Republic. The praetorians mounted guard outside the imperial palace or tent, serving as an *excubiae*, while the *custodes* served as bodyguards.

Another significant difference is in the chain of command. The praetorians were under the orders of the praetorian prefect, chief of staff to the emperor and generally a senior army officer. The *custodes*, on the other hand, were commanded by one of the emperor's servants, always either a slave or freedman. Thus Caligula chose as captain of the guard his chamberlain Helicon, a slave whose other duties included playing ball and practicing gymnastics with the Emperor.²⁵ At the time of Caligula's assassination his captain of the guard was Sabinus, a former gladiator.²⁶ Claudius made his freedman Narcissus captain, and actually raised him to the rank of general by bestowing on him the officer's sword (*pugio*); Nero honored similarly his freedman Tigellinus.²⁷

It is worth noting briefly at this point the outstanding characteristics of the corps of Batavians, for it established precedents which were long followed. First, the corps was recruited from barbarian tribes on the Empire's borders, its members were without citizenship, and it was officered by slaves and freedmen, the lowest social classes. This was quite contrary to all Roman military traditions and set the corps apart from the armed forces of the state, including the praetorian cohorts. This was done as a matter of policy. The emperors trusted the Batavians, says Tacitus, « because they were foreign. »²⁸

Second, the corps' duties were entirely limited to protection of the emperor and his family. The Batavians did not,

²⁵ Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 175.

²⁶ Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 19.

²⁷ Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.33; Philostratus, *vita Apoll.* 4.42.

²⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.58; cf. R. Keune, "Custos," *PW* 4 (1901), coll. 1902-1903.

for example, play any part in official ceremonies, as did the praetorians.²⁹

Finally, members of the corps could not transfer to other troop units, and they never entered the officer corps. This is implicit in the points noted above, but deserves to be stressed here for the sake of contrast with practices of the Later Empire.

* * *

We have no clear evidence for the corps which guarded the emperors after the Batavians were dismissed, although we can be sure that there were guards. Galba formed a guard of young men of equestrian families whom he called *evocati*, but their social rank makes it unlikely that they were actually *custodes*. In any case the unit was dissolved at Galba's death.³⁰ It has been suggested that the emperors depended on gladiators, such as were with Otho at the battle of Bedriacum.³¹

It is most probable, however, that the place of the Batavians was taken by the *speculatores*, a picked company of 300 noncommissioned officers loosely linked with the praetorians, « hommes d'élite dans un corps d'élite. »³² There was good precedent for the use of *speculatores* as guards; Claudius was accustomed to have a few standing near when he attended dinner parties, and Josephus' descriptions of the line of march followed by Vespasian and Titus during their Palestine campaigns indicate that a general's guard was composed of *speculatores*. Texts show that a detachment of *speculatores* was regularly assigned to a general's headquar-

²⁹ E. g., the formal reception and military review held by Nero in honor of King Tiridates, as described by Suetonius, *Nero* 13.

³⁰ Suetonius, *Galba* 10; cf. J. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

³¹ Plutarch, *Otho* 10.3; cf. Paribeni, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

³² Dury, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-110.

ters.³³ All of this supports two brief references to *speculatores* as the bodyguards of Galba and Otho. The second is especially convincing. Otho is described as setting off to meet Vitellius' army attended by praetorians and a « select body of *speculatores* » (*speculatorum lecta corpora*).³⁴

It seems likely, therefore, that during most of the Flavian period the *speculatores* acted as the palace guard. This view is supported by an inscription of A. D. 76 concerning veterans' privileges; the *speculatores* are set apart from the other praetorians.³⁵ This use of an elite corps drawn from the state's armed forces marked a real break with tradition, and was undoubtedly part of a general reaction against Julio-Claudian dynastic practices.

Under Domitian, however, there was a brief revival of the use of *custodes* of the traditional type. No evidence remains concerning the *custodes* themselves, but the accounts of the plot against Domitian and his assassination make it clear that he had entrusted his security to his freedmen, not to regular army officers. In fact one of his freedmen, Parthenius, wore a general's *pugio* and was captain of the guard.³⁶ Nothing is said in the sources about the troops Parthenius commanded, but it is most unlikely that *speculatores* or any other regular army soldiers took orders from a freedman. It is known, however, that just about this time a new corps of palace troops was established, the *equites singulares*, and it

³³ Suetonius, *Claudius* 35; Josephus, *B.J.* 3.6.2; 5.2.1; cf. Domaszewski, p. 32.

³⁴ Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.11; Suetonius, *Galba* 18, tells that once the crowd almost pushed a guard (*speculator*) with his lance against Galba, but as in public ceremonies the emperors were attended by troops other than their *custodes* this is not convincing by itself.

³⁵ *CIL* III, p. 853 (*Privilegia Veteranorum* X). Similarly Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.33, describes the escort of Otho as consisting of *speculatores*, praetorians and praetorian cavalry, again distinguishing between the two groups. Cf. F. Lammert, "Speculatores," *PW* 3A (1929), col. 1585.

³⁶ Dio Cassius, 67.15.1-2; Suetonius, *Domit.* 16-17; Johann. Antioch., fr. 110; cf. R. Hanslik, "Parthenius," *PW* 18 (1949), coll. 1901-1902.

seems quite reasonable to suppose that they were placed under Parthenius.³⁷

The *equites singulares*, like the Batavians, were drawn from barbarian tribes on the borders of the Empire, particularly the barbarian tribes on the Rhine and Danube frontiers.³⁸ On enrollment they took the name of the sovereign they served, just as freedmen took the name of their patron.³⁹ They were therefore *custodes* of the Julio-Claudian type, and the establishment of the corps was probably connected with Domitian's return to dynastic policies in the last years of his reign when he was engaged in a « war to the knife » with the Senate.⁴⁰

The institution of the *equites singulares* may well have been connected with another innovation in security arrangements which has been ascribed to the reign of Domitian, the centralization of the *frumentarii* in Rome for use as political police.⁴¹ It has been suggested that these measures were taken when the corps of *speculatores* was integrated with the praetorian cohorts. When this was done, the theory goes, the *speculatores'* duties as political police were assigned to the new corps of *frumentarii*, while their role as *custodes* was

³⁷ The existence of the *equites singulares* is attested no earlier than the reign of Trajan, but since the document concerned is a diploma of dismissal, it is generally accepted that the corps itself must go back at least to the reign of Domitian. Cf. W. Liebenam, "Equites Singulares," *PIW* 6 (1909), coll. 312-321; E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (Kendal, 1953), p. 100 and n. 55.

³⁸ Bang, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88.

³⁹ G. Henzen, "Iscrizioni recentemente scoperte degli Equites Singulares," *Annali dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* 57 (1885), pp. 235-291, v. p. 266.

⁴⁰ R. Syme, "The Imperial Finances under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan," *JRS* 20 (1930), pp. 55-70.

⁴¹ W. Sinnigen, "The Origins of the Frumentarii," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 27 (1962), pp. 213-224.

assumed by the new corps of *equites singulares*. This seems plausible (« seductive, » says Durry), but cannot be proven.⁴²

With the removal of Domitian, however, a new and more enduring reaction against dynastic policies set in, and this eventually affected the palace guards. Trajan seems to have continued to recruit directly for the *equites singulares*, though nothing is known regarding to whom he entrusted their command. By the time of Hadrian, however, one notes the practice of transferring picked men from the auxiliary units in the provinces into the *equites singulares*; then after several years of service in Rome, many were promoted and sent back to the provinces as legionary centurions. In this way the corps was assimilated to the regular armed forces, functioning as an auxiliary cavalry unit attached to the praetorian cohorts and commanded by the praetorian prefect.⁴³

It can be said, then, that the Antonines dispensed with special palace guards (*custodes*). Their only guards were the praetorians, and their safety was entirely in the hands of their praetorian prefects. We hear an echo of this in the words addressed to a newly-appointed prefect by Trajan as he handed over the sword of office: « I give you this sword to use in my defense if I rule well, or to use against me if I do not. »⁴⁴ Clearly the point of such a public statement was that Trajan had no other guards. Here is an eloquent testimonial to the stability of the Antonine monarchy.

With Commodus this stability began to disappear, and at the same time imperial *custodes* reappeared. Commodus appointed his freedman Cleander as one of the praetorian prefects and formally conferred upon him the sword of office,

⁴² O. Hirschfeld, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 585-588. Durry, *op. cit.*, p. 28 and p. 109, n. 1, hesitantly accepts this.

⁴³ Henzen, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-268; Birley, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102.

⁴⁴ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 13.9.

an unprecedented honor for a freedman.⁴⁵ Undoubtedly Commodus did this in order to establish a separate palace guard to check the power of the praetorians. A few years later a full-scale battle took place between the praetorians and Cleander's troops, called « imperial cavalry » in the sources. It is impossible to tell whether this cavalry unit was the *equites singulares* or a new corps of *custodes*.⁴⁶ It is clear, however, that there was a test of power between the praetorian prefect Laetus and the freedman prefect Cleander, and Laetus won. Cleander was executed, and soon after Laetus did away first with Commodus himself and then with Pertinax. He met his end just as he was planning to remove a third emperor.⁴⁷

These palace revolutions, and the many similar ones in the next century, indicated how defenseless the emperors had become. They were completely at the mercy of their prefects. Hence one of the great problems of the third century: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

* * *

During the third century the imperial court became more militarized than ever. The emperors were almost constantly in the field with their troops and almost always in uniform. Hence « the transformation of the *princeps* into a pure *imperator*, and of palace into camp (*castra*). »⁴⁸ This development naturally affected the character of the emperor's staff. It ceased to be dominated by freedmen and chamberlains; the tone was set instead by men drawn from the officers corps. At the same time the emperors

⁴⁵ SHA, *v. Comm.* 6.13; Herodian 1.12. Cf. Durry, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

⁴⁶ Herodian 1.12-13; Durry, *op. cit.*, p. 381, n. 4 suggests that the *equites singulares* are meant. Herodian's terminology is too vague to permit firm conclusions.

⁴⁷ Passerini, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-311.

⁴⁸ MacMullen, p. 169.

sought to organize new military units on which they could depend for security. Gradually these two tendencies converged.

Generally our sources throw light on the emperors' security arrangements only in connection with their assassinations. We can best review developments, therefore, by examining a few of the better-documented plots of the third century.

Caracalla was cut down while campaigning in Mesopotamia. He had left his army to visit a temple, and was attended only by a small escort which included his bodyguards. The latter, whom Caracalla called his « lions, » were true *corporis custodes*, as is clear from Dio's description: « For the emperor kept Scythians and Germans about him, freemen and slaves alike, whom he had taken away from their masters and wives and had armed, apparently placing more confidence in them than in the soldiers. »⁴⁹ Caracalla's immediate staff, however, was composed of regular army officers: Decius Triccianus, prefect of the *Legio II Parthica* and commander of the escort, two praetorian tribunes, and an NCO serving as groom. This was the key to the situation. All four officers were in league with the praetorian prefect, and it was a simple matter of waiting for the right moment to assassinate the Emperor.⁵⁰

Caracalla's removal marked the triumph of the general staff, the emperor's *officiales*.⁵¹ These were « new men, » not part of the senatorial aristocracy. The prefect Macrinus became emperor, the first equestrian to gain the supreme power. Triccianus, who had begun his career as orderly to the

⁴⁹ Dio Cassius 78.6, tr. E. Cary, *LCL* edition, vol. 9 (9 vols., London and New York, 1914-1927), p. 351. Cf. Bang, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

⁵⁰ *SHA*, v. *Carac.* 6.7; cf. E. Hohl, "Das Ende Caracallas," *Miscellanea Aca-*
demica Berolinensia 2.1 (Berlin, 1950), pp. 276-293.

⁵¹ *SHA*, v. *Carac.* 6.7; *non ignorantibus... plerisque officialium impulsu Martialis.*

governor of Pannonia, now returned to Pannonia as governor himself. And the post of urban prefect, traditionally given to a leader of the senatorial order, went to a man who had risen from the ranks in the military intelligence service. A new class began to take power.⁵²

Gallienus was assassinated after his staff officers had met in council and decided he had to be removed. The deed was entrusted to Cecropius, commander of the *equites Dalmati*, an elite cavalry unit created by Gallienus and evidently serving under his direct command. Cecropius was able to arrange for a false report of an enemy attack to be brought in while he and the Emperor were dining. Gallienus sprang up and went out to battle attended by Cecropius, and was quickly dispatched.⁵³ It is unmistakably clear that the plot included all the principal officers on Gallienus' staff, the *duces et tribuni*.⁵⁴ Whether Gallienus had or had not any other guards can only be a matter of conjecture.

With the plot against Aurelian we are on firmer ground. Aurelian had threatened his secretary with punishment for certain peculations; the secretary was alarmed, decided to forestall his master, and forged an imperial order for the execution of a number of staff officers to whom he then showed it. The officers were convinced of their danger and shortly afterwards killed the Emperor. Now our sources make it clear that these officers were in the Emperor's immediate entourage. They were « military leaders and associates of the Emperor » (*militares viros, amicos ipsius*) with the rank of tribunes; once deceived by the secretary they were able to kill

⁵² Dio Cassius 78.14-15 reflects the dismay of Dio and his fellow senators at the rise of the *novi homines*. Cf. A. Stein, *Der römische Ritterstand* (Munich, 1927), pp. 165-171.

⁵³ Zosimus 1.40-41; *SHA*, *v. Gall.* 14; cf. Stein, "Kekropios nos. 1 and 2," *PW* 11 (1921), col. 118.

⁵⁴ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 33.20; cf. P. Damerau, "Kaiser Claudius II Gothicus," *Klio*, Beiheft 33 (1934), pp. 43-47.

the Emperor while he was actually on the march with his army.⁵⁵ This was possible because they were tribunes of the guard.⁵⁶

But of what guard? Certainly not the praetorian cohorts, which were now usually at Rome rather than in the field with the emperor, and in any case were declining in importance and were soon to be suppressed.⁵⁷ Nor is it likely that the guard was composed of *equites singulares*: that corps was declining along with the praetorians, and in fact has left no record dated later than 250. Instead the guards around Aurelian were probably his *protectores*, a new corps which appears at this time and which deserves our special attention because it is the predecessor of the *scholae palatinae*.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Eutropius 9.15; cf. J. Crook, *Consilium Principis* (Cambridge, Eng., 1955), pp. 21-30, for the significance of *amicus* as a traditional title for men of importance at court.

⁵⁶ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 35.8: *scripta callide composita tribunis quasi per gratiam prodidisset*. Cf. Zosimus 1.62; L. Homo, *Essai sur le regne de l'Empereur Aurelien* (Paris, 1904), p. 324.

⁵⁷ Durry, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-396, based on *Epitome de Caes.* 39.47; *imminute praetorianum cohortium atque in armis vulgi numero*. However, a diploma recently discovered seems to indicate the continued existence of ten praetorian cohorts as late as A.D. 306, so if the statement in the *Epitome* is correct it means that there was a reduction in the effectives of each cohort; cf. M. Bizzarri and C. Forni, "Diploma militare del 306 D.C. rilasciato a un pretoriano di origine italiana," *Athenaeum* 38 (1960), pp. 3-25.

⁵⁸ *CIL* VI.31165 of A.D. 250 is the latest dated record extant of the *equites singulares*, and sometime after 260 their burial ground was being used by the Christian community, so that it has been generally accepted that the corps was reduced or suppressed by the end of the third century. Cf. R. Bartoccini, "Equites singulares," *DE* 2.3, p. 2153; C. Cecchelli and E. Persico, *SS. Marcellino e Pietro* (Rome, 1938), p. 52. Recently A. Ferrua has argued for the continued existence of the corps until the reign of Constantine on the basis of a restored reading in a newly discovered inscription; cf. *Epigraphica* 13 (1951), pp. 115 and 141, but this is not yet proven. The earliest date at which *protectores* can be documented is ca. 250; the general surrounded by *protectores* on the Ludovisi Sarcophagus has recently been identified as Emperor Hostilianus (A.D. 249-251); cf. H. von Heintze, "Studien zu den Porträts des 3 Jh. n. Chr.," *RM* 64 (1957),

The title of *protector* seems to have been first used sometime around A.D. 250. At first it was granted to a few trusted colonels and generals as a mark of special favor; later it was used for an increasing variety of functions. The best way to show the development of its use is to set out the more relevant of the inscriptions, our main source of information.

*Date and Source **

*Name and Titles ***

1. A.D. 261-268
CIL XI.1836
Arezzo,
Italy

...L. Petronio L.f. Sab. Tauro
Volusiano v(iro) con(n)s(ulari)
ordinario praef(ecto) praet(o-
rio) em(inentissimo) v(iro) prae-
f(ecto) vigul(um) p(erfectissi-
mo) v(iro) trib(un)o coh(ortis)
primae praet(oriae) Protect(ori)
Augg. Nn. item trib(un)o coh-
(ortis) IIII praet(oriae)...

pp. 69-91. So far no clear proof has ever been adduced to support the theory of Germanic origin from the *Gefolgschaft* advanced by Seeck and Domaszewski, although it has recently been accepted without any further discussion by G. Gigli, "I protectores e i domestici nel IV secolo," *Atti dell'Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti Morali* 1949, pp. 383-390 (with full references to older literature). Emperor Trajan Decius, father of Hostilianus and senior ruler, was notably "Roman" and conservative, so that it is difficult to believe that he would institute a rank based on foreign traditions, or even continue one so recently instituted. Stein (1), p. 57, avoided conjecture and said that the title appears "around the middle of the third century," and that is precisely what the evidence indicates at present.

* Dates given are certain unless preceded by "ca.," in which case reasons for the approximate dating are given in the notes.

** Parentheses and lower case letters are used to fill out abbreviations; three periods indicate omissions; brackets indicate restorations; three periods within brackets indicate losses not restored.

2. A.D. 260-268
CIL III.3424
 Alt-Ofen,
 Hungary
 ...Clementius Silvius v(ir) e(gre-
 gius) a(gens) v(ices) p(raesidis)
 et Val. Marcellinus praef(ectus)
 leg(ionis) prot(ector) Aug(usti)
 n(ostri) a(gens) v(ices) l(egati)...

3. A.D. 269
CIL XII.2228
 Grenoble
 ...praepositi et ducenar(ii) pro-
 tect(ores) tendentes in Narb-
 (onensem) prov(inciam) sub cu-
 ra Iul. Placidiani v(iri) p(erfec-
 tissimi) praefect(i) vigil(um)...

4. A.D. 270-275
CIL III. 327
 Nicomedia
 di manes Claudii Herculani pro-
 tectoris Aureliani Augusti vixit
 annos quadraginta memoriam
 Claudius Dion[y]sius protector
 Augusti frater ipsius.

5. *CIL* VI.3238
 Rome
 d(is) m(anibus) Aurel(io) Vital-
 (io) t(ribuni) b(eneficiario) equ-
 (iti) sing(ulari) turm(ae) Lupio-
 nis nat(o) Dacus ala Campacon-
 (um) vixit ann(os) XXX mes(es)
 II die(s) V mil(itavit) ann(os)
 XII. Aurel(ius) Severus protec-
 t(or) pr(aefectorum) pr(aetorio)
 b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit).

6. ca. A.D. 288 ⁵⁹
CIL XIII.8274
 near Cologne
 Viatorinus protector mi(li)tavit
 an(n)os triginta occisus in bar-
 barico iuxta Divitia(m) a Fran-
 co; vicarius Divite(n)si[u]m.

⁵⁹ This may with some probability be assigned to the years A.D. 286-288 when Maximian restored the Rhine frontier, subdued the Franks, and strengthened Divitia as a frontier bastion; cf. W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* (Paris, 1946), pp. 68-72.

7. A.D. 290
CIL III.10406
 Alt-Ofen,
 Hungary

Herculi Aug(ustorum) C. Aurel-
 (ius) Firminus pr(a)ef(ectus)
 leg(ionis) II Adi(utricis) ex
 prot(ectore) v(otum) s(olvit)
 l(ibens) m(erito) imp(eratori-
 bus) d(ominis) n(ostris) [D]io-
 cletiano IIII et Maximiano
 Aug(ustis) co(n)s(ulibus).

8. ca. A.D. 300 ⁶⁰
CIL III.6194
 Dacia

Dis Manibus Val(erio) Thium-
 po qui militavit in leg(ione) XI
 Cl(audia) lectus in sacro comi-
 t(atu) lanciarius deinde protexit
 annis V missus praef(ectus)
 leg(ionis) Hercul(iae) [e]git an-
 n(is) II semise et decessit vixit
 ann(is) XXXXV...

9. ca. A.D. 300 ⁶¹
 Thrace
IGR I.1496;
 translation
 of Stein,
 « Traianus 1, »
PW 6A (1937),
 col. 2088

Traianus Mucianus duc(enarius)
 miles cohortis I Concordien-
 sium et legionis II Parthicae,
 eques cohortis VII praetoriae,
 evocatus, (centurio) protector
 leg(ionis) XIII gem(inae), (cen-
 turio) prot(ector) vigilum, (cen-
 turio) pr[o]tect(or) urb(anicia-
 nus), prot(ector) cohort(is) V
 pr[ae]t(oriae), princeps prot(ec-
 tor), primop(ilus), ... praefectus

⁶⁰ The phrase *in sacro comitatu* belongs to the era of the Tetrarchy; cf. Wm. Seston, "Du *comitatus* de Dioclétien aux *comitatenses* de Constantin," *Historia* 4 (1955), pp. 284-296; Jones (1), p. 43.

⁶¹ Domaszewski, pp. 185-192, comments on this inscription at length, dating the beginning of Mucianus' career ca. A.D. 245-250, so that this inscription, coming at the end of his career, would belong to the end of the third century.

- leg(ionis) III Flaviae, dux legionum VII Claudiae et IIII Flaviae...
10. ca. A.D. 300 ⁶²
AE 1954, 135
 Libya
 [...] Protec[tori] [...] item primip[i]la[ri] protectori item centurio(ni) IIII Flaviae et Protectori item ce[nturi]o(ni) leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae)...
11. ca. A.D. 300 ⁶²
CIL III.6059
 Nicomedia
 Valerio Vincentio ac[t]uario protectorum Antia marito dulcissimo cum [q]uo convivit annis sex.

This has recently been confirmed by the discovery of an inscription in honor of Heraclianus, prefect under Gallienus, set up by a Mucianus in Traiana Augusta, birthplace of our Mucianus, so that the two are very likely the same; cf. G. Bersanetti, "Eracliano, prefetto del pretorio di Gallieno," *Epigraphica* 4 (1942), pp. 169-176. Stein, "Traianus no. 1," *PW* 6A (1937), col. 2088, whose restorations and translation are followed in the text, corrects Domaszewski on a number of points, following Babut (2), pp. 243-245.

⁶² These three inscriptions cannot be dated even approximately with any confidence, but certain considerations support the suggested date of ca. 300 (plus or minus 20 years) in each case. No. 10 shows an early use of the title *protector* when it was still a sort of decoration, awarded to a man of NCO status and on duty in the provinces, so this is roughly contemporaneous with the similar usage in no. 9; cf. Babut (2), pp. 245-246. No. 11 points to a period when Nicomedia was an imperial capital and this was especially true during the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius, although emperors continued to stay there at least through 365; cf. W. Ruge, "Nikomedea," *PW* 17 (1947), coll. 476-478. Similarly the origin of no. 12 points to a period when an emperor was regularly in residence at Rome, the reign of Maxentius (actually A.D. 305-312), but of course emperors visited Rome on several occasions during the fourth century. However, there is the added factor in the case of this inscription that it was found in the catacomb of S. Sebastiano and appears to be pagan. The catacomb was evidently handed over to the Christian community by Constantine soon after his victory, for it was the center of the cult of St. Peter and remained so until the completion of Old St. Peter's in 354; cf. E. Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul* (London, 1959), pp. 152-154. This fact supports the attribution of no. 12 to a period before 312.

12. ca. A.D. 300 ⁶²
AE 1946, 127
 Rome
 D(is) M(anibus) Val(erius) Pro-
 clianus protector qui vixit an-
 (n)is XLIIII et Val(erius) Ne-
 potianus exarcus promotus do-
 m(i)nicus qui vixit annis XXX
 fratres Valeria Palladia coniugi
 carissimo bene merenti et cog-
 nato suo domum eterna[m] do-
 lens fabricavit.
13. ca. A.D. 305-316 ⁶³
CIL III.12900
 Spalato, Dalmatia
 [Gr]atiani pr[otectoris] [d]o-
 mestici...
14. ca. A.D. 312 ⁶⁴
CIL III.9835
 Dalmatia
 D(is) M(anibus) Val(erio) Va-
 [l]enti [...] [p]rotectori de-
 fu[ncto] bello civile in [It]alia
 ann(is) L [...]
15. A.D. 334
AE 1948, 136
 Transjordan
 Cum pervidisset Vincentius
 Protector agens Basie plurimos
 ex agrariensibus dum aqua[s]
 sibi in uso transfer<e>rent
 insidiatos a Saracenos (*sic*) pe-
 risse, receptaculum aquar(um)
 ex fundamentis fecit, Optato et
 Paulino VV. CC. cons.

⁶³ The restorations relate this inscription to Gratian the Elder; his promo-
 tion to the *protectores* by direct imperial appointment is attested by Ammianus
 30.7.3, and this identification is probable, although of course not certain. It is
 accepted by O. Seeck, "Gratianus no. 2," *PW* 7 (1912), col. 1831, and by A.
 Solari, "Graziano Maior," *Athenaeum* 10 (1932), pp. 160-164. In any case a
protector domesticus serving at court in Spalato would probably belong to the
 period A.D. 305-316, when Diocletian was in permanent residence there after
 his retirement.

⁶⁴ Bormann in the *CIL* note *ad. loc.* refers this to the war between Constan-
 tine and Maxentius, which was then termed a "civil war."

16. ca. A.D. 365-381 ⁶⁵
CIL XIII.3682
 Trier
 Hariulfus protector domesitigus
 (*sic*) [f]ilius Hanhaval-di regalis
 gentis Burgundionum qui vixit
 (*sic*) annos XX et menses nove
 et dies nove Reu[t]ulo avuncu-
 lus ipsius fecit.
17. ca. A.D. 410-500 ⁶⁶
AE 1939, 45
 Greece
 D(is) M(anibus) Viator Eilius
 Liciniani protectori de Scola
 Seniore Peditum qui vixsit an-
 nos quattor meses nove hic est
 depositus.
18. A.D. 453
CIL VI.32942
 Rome
 [De]positus in pace Heraclius
 [protec]tor dominicus qui vixit
 annis LXV [co]ns(ulatu) Venan-
 ti Opilionis V(iri) C(larissimi)
 III Kal. Aug.

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 show examples of the first *protectores*, veterans of equestrian rank whom Gallienus and his successors appointed to military commands in place of the excluded senatorials. It is with this fundamental change, which ended

⁶⁵ Trier was an imperial capital as early as 311 and continued to be such until the latter part of the fourth century, but the years in which it was the seat of the imperial court were primarily 367-387, when Valentinian I and Gratian made it their main residence. Cf. Rau, "Treveri," *PW* 6A (1937), coll. 2341-2343. Gratian, moreover, was noted for his partiality to soldiers of barbarian origins and is supposed to have been deserted by his troops because of this; cf. Zosimus 4.35 and Jones (1), pp. 158, 160.

⁶⁶ Sometime after A.D. 400 the *protectores* were divided into *pedites* and *equites*: the first *comes domesticorum equitum* is attested for 409, but the division does not seem to have existed at the fall of Stilicho, so the change has been ascribed to the year 408; cf. Stein (1), pp. 240, 258, 545-546. Since the inscription is in Latin but comes from the Eastern Empire it may reasonably be dated to the fifth century, when the use of Latin was still widespread.

the Augustan settlement, that the institution of the *protectores* must be connected. They formed a trusted group of « king's men, » bound to the ruler by a special tie of loyalty, and no doubt it was because of this that the use of the title was expanded. Volusianus (no. 1) was perhaps the first *protector* of all, and was certainly one of the leading figures of Gallienus' reign. Marcellinus (no. 2) was one of the equestrians to whom Gallienus gave a legionary command after excluding the senatorial class from military commands; his title « acting commander » (*agens vices legati*) indicates the transitional stage. No. 3 records an expeditionary army sent out under a number of these equestrian commanders led by the prefect of the *vigiles*. The following inscription (no. 4), however, which must belong to the years immediately following, shows two soldiers attached to no unit but rather to the person of the Emperor Aurelian. They were cavalrymen, for on the stele above the inscription is the figure of a horseman. No. 5 shows a *protector* similarly attached to the service of the praetorian prefects, and nos. 6-12 indicate that by the end of the third century *protectores* were serving at court, in the field, and on the frontiers. Nos. 13-18 show further development in the use of the title during the fourth and fifth centuries, when a distinction arose between those *protectores* attached to the court and those assigned to the *magistri militum* for staff or field duty. Nos 7-9 and probably no. 13 (see note 63) illustrate the possibilities of advancement open to *protectores*, an important topic which will be discussed below in the light of the evidence supplied by Ammianus. No. 17, showing the appointment of an infant to a *schola* of *protectores*, i.e. one of the *scholae palatinae*, documents the decline of the *scholae* as an effective military force in the fifth century. This survey indicates the changing nature of the title, and the importance of specifying precisely what period is meant when discussing the

position and functions of the *protectores*. What follows is about the period covered by the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine.⁶⁷

The *protectores* on duty at court were called *protectores domestici* or simply *domestici*. They were organized as a corps with their own officers and a commander. The officers had the rank of tribune, and since they were members of the emperor's personal staff they presumably held the *tribunus maior* conferred by special imperial brevet (*per epistolam sacram Imperatoris iudicio*) rather than the *tribunus minor* earned by service (*ex labore*).⁶⁸ We have record of only a few of these palatine tribunes, but that little suffices to show the importance of their position. Maximinus Daia, owing to the patronage of Galerius, had the following career: *scutarius* (guard), *protector*, *tribunus*, *Caesar*.⁶⁹ His tribunate was therefore a very high rank, making him eligible for the imperial dignity itself. The career of Constantius I was *protector*, *tribunus*, *praeses Dalmatiarum*, *Caesar*;⁷⁰ his son, the

⁶⁷ A. Alföldi, *Cambridge Ancient History*, (Cambridge, Eng., 1932), vol. 12, pp. 219-220; C. Keyes, *The Rise of the Equites* (Princeton, 1915), pp. 39-41; and Babut (2), pp. 238-246, discuss the origin and significance of the title *protector* and summarize the earlier literature. On the career of Petronius Volusianus see A. v. Domaszewski, "Beiträge zur Kaisergeschichte," *Philologus* 19 (1906), pp. 344-356; Keyes, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37; E. Groag, "Petronius no. 73," *PW* 19 (1938), coll. 1225-1227. For a description of the stele on which no. 4 appears see G. Perrot, *Bullettino dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* 1861, pp. 120-121. Changes in the titles, assignments and organization of the *protectores* during the fourth and fifth centuries are discussed by Babut (1), pp. 230-243, and (2), pp. 279-286; Stein (1), pp. 57-58, 240-241; Jones (2), pp. 636-640. Stein criticized one of Babut's main theses on the basis of the sixth-century evidence but later withdrew this; cf. Stein (2), p. 429, n. 1.

⁶⁸ Vegetius 2.7; cf. Jones (2), pp. 641-643.

⁶⁹ Lactantius, *De mort. persec.* 19.6.

⁷⁰ *Anon. Vales.* 1.1; O. Seeck, "Constantius no. 1," *PW* 4 (1901), col. 1040, thinks this is spurious because it does not show Constantius holding the post of praetorian prefect; but Constantius' tenure of this office is itself only a "Vermutung."

great Constantine himself, was assigned by Diocletian to the staff of Galerius with the rank of *tribunus maior* and *comes primi ordinis*, the latter title giving him the right to attend meetings of the imperial council.⁷¹ Perhaps we may also reckon among these palatine tribunes the tribune Lampadius to whom Diocletian handed over the four Christian masons for interrogation and judgment.⁷² Both the Emperors Claudius II and Probus were probably palatine tribunes. At the time of Gallienus' death Claudius was in command of a force at Ticinum with the rank of tribune; the fact that he was chosen Emperor by the generals indicates that this was no mere legionary command.⁷³ Probus, at least according to the *Historia Augusta*, served on Valerian's staff as tribune, at which time he would have been between twenty-one and twenty-eight years of age.⁷⁴

Finally, at the head of all the *domestici* was a commander. This post was in existence by 283, at which time its holder, Diocletian, was chosen Emperor by his colleagues in the high command; *ducum consilio tribunorumque Valerius Diocletianus domesticos regens ob sapientiam deligitur*.⁷⁵ Victor's statement, with its matter-of-fact mention of a *consilium*,

⁷¹ Lactantius, *De mort. persec.* 18.10. Lactantius says *tribunus ordinis primi*, telescoping the two titles; cf. J. Moreau *ad. loc.*, *De la Mort des Persecuteurs*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1954), pp. 313-314.

⁷² "Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum," ed. W. Wattenbach, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie*, vol. 33 (1896), pp. 1281-1301.

⁷³ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 33.28.

⁷⁴ *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1832), p. 509, gives Probus' date of birth as 232; *SHA*, v. *Probi* 4-6, describes his appointment as tribune by Valerian while still a "beardless youth" (*imberbem tribunum*). R. Henze, "Aurelius no. 194," *PW* 2 (1896), col. 2518, rejects this simply because he considers the *Historia Augusta* unreliable in general. More recently arguments supporting the *SHA* account have been advanced by G. Vitucci, *L'imperatore Probo* (Rome, 1952), pp. 1-6. The fact that Probus was undoubtedly commander of the Egyptian campaign in 271, when he was only about 40, indicates that he probably did start near the top.

⁷⁵ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 39.1.

seems to indicate that effective power was in the hands of a small group of palatine officers, and among them the commander of the *domestici* was certainly not least in influence. Zonaras says Diocletian had the title of *comes domesticorum*; this has usually been dismissed as anachronistic, but it seems clear that though the title may not have existed then the corps and office did.⁷⁶

Thus by the end of the third century the *protectores domestici* constituted an elite corps of great importance. It had begun as a guard, but soon most of the Empire's general officers were drawn from its ranks so that it came to be a sort of general staff as well.⁷⁷

* * *

The creation of the corps of *protectores domestici* was part of a general development in Roman government. Gradually, beginning with Hadrian and then much more swiftly after the accession of Septimius Severus, the entire administrative system was reorganized on military lines. The model of organization came to be an army commander's *officium*, and the whole government service became one great *militia*, a hierarchy of *officiales*.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Only Zonaras 12.31 gives Diocletian a title (*comes domesticorum*); the other sources give paraphrases. W. Ensslin, "Valerius no. 142," *PW* 7A (1948), coll. 2422-2423, notes that Diocletian had been consul suffect and was clearly one of the chief officials; he accepts the office of chief of the *domestici* although not the title *comes* itself. The main reason for judging Zonaras' account anachronistic in using the title *comes* is based on the theory of O. Seeck that the title *comes* was not used for officials after Alexander Severus until revived by Constantine; "Comites," *PW* 4 (1901), coll. 629-630. This recently has been rejected as unproven and even unlikely by J. Crook, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96. Cf. Jones (1), p. 53.

⁷⁷ G. Gigli, "I Protectores e i domestici nel IV secolo," *Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti Morali*, ser. 8, vol. 4 (1949), pp. 383-390. Cf. Jones (1), p. 54; (2), pp. 638-639.

⁷⁸ A. H. M. Jones, "The Roman Civil Service (Clerical and Sub-Clerical Grades)," *JRS* 39 (1949), pp. 38-55; Crook, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-141.

The basic factor in this development was the use of soldiers on staff duty for an increasing number of functions. Commanders had long had on their staffs a number of *beneficarii*, soldiers excused from field duties to serve as aides. They were used for keeping records, guarding roads and communication points, commanding local police stations, taking the census, and simply as aides-de-camp.⁷⁹ They ranked as NCO's, gained valuable experience and enjoyed the advantages in conditions of service and promotion which headquarters duty always brings. These factors attracted young men with connections; many began their careers with staff appointments and spent little or no time in the field. « By the third century at any rate a separate cadre of *officiales* was already forming which had very little connection with the fighting troops. »⁸⁰

This is the pattern of which the *protectores domestici* form a part. They were young men serving as the emperor's guards and aides, his *beneficarii*. In the few inscriptions cited above the connection is apparent. Thus Volusianus (no. 1) began his career as a *centurio deputatus*, an officer on detached duty at imperial headquarters.⁸¹ Aurelius Severus (no. 11) was the brother of a *tribuni beneficarius*, and in no. 5 we have two brothers who both were accepted into the

⁷⁹ MacMullen, pp. 49-76, describes the civil functions; military functions are discussed by E. Stein, *Die Kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat* (Vienna, 1932), pp. 78-83.

⁸⁰ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 45. For contrast with Early Empire practice see Pliny, *Ep.* 10.21, in which it is stated that the prefect of the Pontic Coast had to content himself with a staff of 13 *beneficarii*; on his complaining that this was inadequate, Trajan replied: "As far as possible we should keep to the rule that soldiers must not be withdrawn from active service" (*Ep.* 10.22).

⁸¹ P. Baillie Reynolds, "The Troops Quartered in the Castra Peregrinorum," *JRS* 13 (1923), pp. 168-189, describes the role and organization of the force as the emperor's personal *officium*. The high rank of NCO's in the *castra peregrinorum* is discussed by A. von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* (Bonn, 1908), p. 81 and p. 104.

imperial guard. These were representatives of the new class which supplied « the cadre of *officiales* »; they began near the top.⁸²

From this point of view the formation of the new corps of guards was part of the militarization of the government. The *protectores* served as *beneficarii* of the emperor, the core of his *officium*, and as the headquarters troops of the emperor they came to control his empire.

⁸² A. Stein, *Der römische...*, pp. 167-171: "Es hat sich ferner gezeigt, dass von den Männern, die in Militärdienst emporgekommen sind, fast alle von Anfang an Zenturionen oder wenigstens Principales waren" (p. 170).

Chapter III

FORMATION AND ORGANIZATION

When Constantine marched against Maxentius in 312, his most determined opponents were the praetorian guards. They had not been reformed by Diocletian, but instead had been reduced in numbers and importance and left in Rome as a mere garrison force. Maxentius found his earliest and staunchest supporters among the praetorians, for in making Rome once more an imperial residence he had restored their old importance and privileges. At the battle of Saxa Rubra they formed the core of Maxentius's army and fought bravely against Constantine along with Maxentius' *custodes*, the *cohortes palatinae*. Many of both groups perished with Maxentius when the Milvian Bridge collapsed.¹ Shortly thereafter Constantine disbanded the praetorians and ended the organization's existence; it was too closely connected with the Principate to fit in with the new order.² The *cohortes palatinae* no doubt vanished along with it.³

Two new military organizations created by Constantine took their place. The praetorians were replaced as the emperor's field army by the *palatini*, a select force which developed out of Diocletian's *comitatus*, and by the marshals attached to the emperor's staff, now called *magistri praesenta-*

¹ Eusebius, *HE* 9.9.5; cf. H. L'Orange, *Der spätantike Bilderschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (Berlin, 1939), p. 48, pp. 68-71.

² Zosimus 2.17; cf. Durry, pp. 392-396.

³ R. Paribeni, *Notizie degli Scavi* 1933, pp. 485-486.

les.⁴ And as the new palace guard the *scholae palatinae* were founded.

As discussed above, the use of *schola* as the unit of organization was characteristic of various corps attached to the palace in the Later Empire. The fact that the *scholae palatinae* took their name from this practice indicates that they were among the first so organized and indeed may have served as a model for the other palatine services. In fact the earliest mention of a unit called a *schola* is connected with the *lanciararii*, a guards regiment under the Tetrarchy: Valerius Maxentius, *eques ex numero lanciarorum*, was a member of *iscola (sic) aequitum*.⁵ There was therefore a cavalry *schola* attached to the *lanciararii*; after Constantine separated infantry and cavalry this must have become an independent unit, and perhaps served as the nucleus of the *scholae*.⁶

Just when Constantine founded the *scholae* is not known. Although it has been said this occurred in 312 after the praetorians were disbanded,⁷ there is no necessary connection between the two events. The praetorians were not Constantine's guards, and he had his own before Saxa Rubra. The Arch of Constantine has a panel showing the Emperor conducting the siege of Verona; he is surrounded by unhelmeted guards carrying large shields, and these resemble in every way later representations of *scholares*.⁸ A *terminus ante quem*, however, is supplied by two laws concerning municipal food rations in Constantinople. They specifically

⁴ Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 234-237; W. Ensslin, "Palatini," *PW* 18 (1942), coll. 2530-2535. W. Seston, "Du comitatus de Dioclétien aux comitatenses de Constantin," *Historia* 4 (1955), pp. 284-296, reviews more recent literature.

⁵ *CIL* VI.32965; cf. S. Mazzarino, *DE* 4 (1946), pp. 366-367.

⁶ N. Baynes, "The Army Reforms of Diocletian and Constantine," *JRS* 15 (1925), pp. 201-204; H. Parker, "The Legions of Diocletian and Constantine," *JRS* 23 (1933), pp. 175-189.

⁷ O. Seeck, "Scholae Palatinae," *PW* 2A (1921), col. 621; Boak, p. 60.

⁸ H. L'Orange, *op. cit.*, plate 89, pp. 60-65. L'Orange calls them *protectores*; this is corrected by J. Kollwitz, *Gnomon* 18 (1942), pp. 108-109.

state that Constantine conferred the right to an *annona civica* on members of the *scholae scutariorum et scutariorum clibanariorum*; this probably occurred in 330, when Constantine formally inaugurated his new capital, and these were probably the two original *scholae*.⁹

In any case we must understand the creation of the *scholae* as part of an evolutionary development. The existence of a special *schola* within the *lanciararii* is the most important single piece of evidence pointing to this, but in general all that we know of how Roman institutions changed supports such a conception.

* * *

Because of their close connection with the emperor and his service, the *scholae* stood at the top of the military hierarchy and were quite separate from other units. This was emphasized by official terminology. The frontier and field armies were organized in *numeri*, and the official description of the Chief Notary's duty of keeping a list of all army units was *scolas etiam et numeros tractat*; thus the *scholae* formed a category by themselves as opposed to all the other armed forces.¹⁰ A law of 396 carefully distinguishes between field, frontier and palace troops: *Ad omnium utique numerorum sive vexillationum aut etiam scholarum tribunos...*¹¹

More important, the *scholae* were quite removed from the regular chain of command. Their tribunes were not responsible to a regular army general under the high command,

⁹ C. Th. 14.17.9-10; cf. Mommsen, GS 6, p. 231; O. Seeck, PW 2A (1921), col. 621; D. van Berchem, *Les distributions de blé et d'argent à la plèbe Romaine sous l'Empire* (Geneva, 1939), pp. 102-104. The privileges granted to the *scholae* were part of a general program by which Constantine conferred special privileges on various groups drawn to his new capital; cf. Stein (1), pp. 126-128.

¹⁰ *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), Or. 18.5; cf. Mommsen, GS 6, pp. 207-208.

¹¹ C. Th. 7.4.23.

but instead took orders from the Master of the Offices. This minister first appeared ca. 300, and as late as 323 his title was *tribunus et magister officiorum*. As such he was very likely a senior tribune in the praetorian prefecture who had been assigned to the emperor's personal service as his adjutant and as commander of the imperial bodyguards. The two references to the *tribunus et magister* in the Theodosian Code show that he was concerned with the emperor's official correspondence with provincial governors. The emperor's servants were organized along the lines of a military *officium*; hence the military title of his chief secretary.¹²

Sometime ca. 318, however, Constantine reorganized the imperial administrative system, and the most notable feature of this reorganization was that the praetorian prefecture was greatly changed in character and many of its functions were transferred to the Master. It was probably in connection with this change that the Master was raised from *tribunus* to *comes et magister*, and it was then, undoubtedly, that the *scholae* were transferred from the praetorian prefecture to the Master's department; it was only after he was raised from *tribunus* to ministerial rank with the title of *comes* that he could be commander of the tribunes of the *scholae*.¹³ Thus the *scholae*, with the other corps attached to the palace, formed part of the emperor's personal staff, his *officium*, and the Master was his Chief of Staff. This position is clearly expressed in the full title of a mid-fourth century Master: *magister officiorum omnium, comes domesticus ordinis primi*.¹⁴

¹² C. Th. 16.10.1 (320), 11.9.1 (323); cf. Boak, pp. 24-29. E. Stein, in a review of Boak in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 25 (1925), pp. 172-175, argued that the Master of Offices was not raised to ministerial rank until ca. A.D. 318.

¹³ Stein (1), pp. 113-114, 117-120; Boak, pp. 29-33; Lengle, "Tribunus," *PW* 6A (1937), coll. 2447-2448.

¹⁴ *CIL* VI.1721 (A.D. 353-360); cf. Boak, pp. 105-106.

Another indication of the close connection between emperor and *scholares* is the use of the imperial *nomen*. As early as the reign of Claudius II officers of the imperial guard began adopting the imperial *nomen* as their own. Thus Aurelian had guards bearing the *nomen* of his predecessor, soon after his reign a number of Aurelii are recorded, and Diocletian's rule was also reflected in a large number of military Valerii.¹⁵ Under Constantine and his successors the practice became of basic importance; a new class of service nobility was created which owed its position entirely to imperial favor, and this bond was proclaimed by the use of the imperial *nomen*, Flavius. There were civilian Flavii who served the emperor as secret agents, confidential secretaries and financial officers; the military Flavii, however, were originally all drawn from one group, the men who served the emperor as *custodes*, « protectors of the imperial person » (*protectores divini lateris*).¹⁶

Among these Flavian guardsmen is the Tiberius Flavius Constans who held the rank of *centurio protector*, evidently not long after A. D. 300 when *protector* was still a sort of decoration rather than a recognized rank.¹⁷ Even more significant is the case of an enlisted man in the guards, enrolled when nineteen, clearly a German who assumed the imperial *nomen* on his induction.¹⁸

The *scholares* were therefore closely connected with the

¹⁵ Claudius: *CIL* III.327 (*Claudius Herculanus protector Aureliani Augusti... Claudius Dionysius protector Augusti*); Aurelii: *CIL* III.1805 (A.D. 280: *M. Aurelius Valerius... ex protectoribus*) and *CIL* III.10406 (A.D. 287: *Aurelius Firminius... ex protectore*); Valerii: *CIL* III.6194 (*Valerius Thiumpus... lectus in sacro comitatu*, the last phrase dating this to the Tetrarchy).

¹⁶ A. Mócsy, "Der Name Flavius als Rangbezeichnung in der Spätantike," *Akte des IV. internationalen Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik* (Vienna, 1964), pp. 257-263, esp. page 259.

¹⁷ *CIL* XIII.8291.

¹⁸ *CIL* V.4369: *Flavius Higgs scutarius Scola Tertia...*

emperor's service, and as such enjoyed many privileges. Procopius tells us of the *scholares* that « the Treasury has been accustomed from earliest times always to pay them higher wages than all others. » The use of the term *schola* for their organization implies, as discussed above, that all of them had NCO status.¹⁹

The *scholae* were similar in that they were all cavalry units²⁰ of 500 men.²¹ They differed, however, in equipment

¹⁹ Procopius, *HA* 24.16; *officiales* in general enjoyed steadily increasing privileges. Cf. MacMullen, pp. 65-73.

²⁰ Ammianus 15.5.33 states that a *schola armaturarum* went over to Constantius II at Mursa; Julian, *Or.* I 48B, refers to this as a cavalry unit. Since the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Or.* 11.4-10; *Occ.* 9.4-8) lists the *scholae* without distinction, they were almost certainly all cavalry units. Furthermore, "the personal escort of the emperor must have been mounted" (Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 232, n. 3).

²¹ At Justinian's accession there were 7 *scholae* totalling 3,500 men, and he added 4 *scholae* totalling 2,000 men; this indicates a *schola* of 500 men, the regular size of cavalry units. This was established by Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 232, and accepted by O. Seeck, *PW* 2A (1921), coll. 621-622; Grosse, p. 94; Boak, p. 60. Babut (2), pp. 264-265, argued from *C. Th.* 6.24.1 that since 50 *domestici* were assigned to each *schola* this indicates that, as late as 362, the strength of a *schola* was 1,000 men; this has been accepted by Stein (1), p. 477, n. 150. However, as Babut himself notes, this does not fit with what we know of the organization of an *ala miliaria*, which had 24 squads, not 50. Furthermore, the Latin of *C. Th.* 6.24.1 (*Scias senum capitum domesticis per singulasque scholas quinquagenis...*) states that "a six-fold ration shall be issued to each of the 50 *domestici* assigned to the *scholae*"; it does not say that there were 50 in *each schola*. The passage is so translated in *The Theodosian Code*, tr. C. Pharr, Princeton (1952), p. 135. Other arguments for an original strength of 1,000 have been advanced by L. Várady, "New Evidences on Some Problems of the Late Roman Military Organization," *Acta Antiqua* 9 (1961), pp. 333-396; cf. p. 364, n. 98. His sources are (a) Lydus, *de Mag.* 2.24, in which the crucial passage is in the present tense (Θεωρεῖται εἰς μυρίους) and refers to the sixth century, not the fourth; in any case Lydus speaks of 10,000 *scholares*, which would mean there were 10 *scholae*, for which there is no evidence whatever; evidently the word μύριος is simply used indefinitely here for a large number, as often; cf. Liddell and Scott, *s.v.* (b) *C. Th.* 6.27.23 and *C.J.* 12.20.3 which show that the *schola* of *agentes in rebus* numbered over 1,000 (1,174 in the first, 1,248 in the second) and that this shows the original strength of a *schola* was 1,000. But both these laws are of the fifth century, and the first specifically speaks of "the

and, at least at first, in recruitment, and this was reflected in the names of the various *scholae*. In the early fifth century there were twelve *scholae*, seven in the Eastern Empire and five in the Western; of these, five were *scholae* of *scutarii*, one each was of *scutarii clibanarii* and *scutarii sagittarii*, two were of *armaturae* and three were of *gentiles*.²² The *scutarii* and *scutarii clibanarii* seem to have been the first *scholae* formed, judging from the specific reference in *C. Th.* 14.17.9 discussed above. Had other *scholae* existed at the time, they would no doubt have been assured permanent rations too, and would have been mentioned in the edict.

The names *scutarii* and *clibanarii* refer to armament. The *scutum* was the standard Roman shield; Vegetius implies that it was used by all or at least most units, since he says that a soldier's unit, name and company were indicated on his *scutum*. There were many units called *scutarii* other than *scholae*, all of them cavalry; the name really tells us very little about the *scholae* so called.²³ *Clibanarii*, on the other hand, we know to have been derived from the Persian word for mail armor, and it was used for Persian, Parthian and Palmyrene cavalymen in Roman service.²⁴ Hence, it is not surprising that when the *scholae* were divided between East and West, probably in 395, the *clibanarii* went to the East.

The other names tell us more. *Armatura* was first used for a difficult drill which was performed as a military spectacle on ceremonial occasions. The members of the drill squad

new official register," and in general we know that in the fourth and fifth centuries the number of *agentes* varied from 17 to 10,000 (Grosse, pp. 105-106). Any argument based on the size of this particular *schola*, therefore, does not seem convincing.

²² *Not. Dig.*, Or. 11.4-10; Occ. 9.4-8.

²³ Vegetius 2.18 (*scutum*); *Not. Dig.*, index p. 319 (s.v. *scutarii*).

²⁴ *SHA*, v. *Alex. Sev.* 56.5; *catafractarios quos illi* [= Persiani] *clibanarios vocant*. Cf. Ammianus 16.10.8; Fiebiger, "Clibanarii," *PW* 4 (1900), col. 22.

were especially chosen by the sergeant major (*campidoctor*) and themselves took the name *armaturae*. Claudius gives a description of an *armatura* performed in honor of Honorius' sixth consulship. No doubt it was in connection with such performances that a picked corps of men was kept at court and became the core of the *schola armaturarum*.²⁵ It is worthy of note that in Ammianus *scutarii* and *gentiles* are found assigned to Caesars, but only *Augusti* have *armaturae*.²⁶ *Gentiles* refers to the *schola's* recruitment, for this was the word used for barbarians in general and for those tribes in particular which were allied with the Empire. Some of these tribes lived on lands granted them by the Empire «for the care and protection of the border and of the border fortifications»; others were settled within the Empire and were governed by Roman prefects and Roman law.²⁷ All were obliged by the terms of their alliance (*foedus*) to supply the Empire regularly with contingents of troops.²⁸

²⁵ Vegetius 2.23: *Armaturam quae festis diebus exhibetur in circo, non tantum armaturae, qui sub campidoctore sunt...* Cf. Pollack, "Armatura no. 3," *PW* 2 (1895), coll. 1178-1179; on the *armatura* for Honorius see Claudian, *De VI cons. Hon.* 11.621-639; on the origins of the corps see Th. Mommsen, "Zu den Inschriften des Nodonheilighums," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 68 (1880), pp. 53-55.

²⁶ Ammianus 14.11.21; 15.4.10; 15.5.6; cf. O. Seeck, *PW* 2A (1921), col. 621.

²⁷ *C. Th.* 7.15.1; 11.30.62 (regarding appeals to governors *a gentilibus vel a prefectis eorum*); 12.11.10 (*gentes* who have settled in the Empire "seeking Roman prosperity"). For a full account of the origins and character of barbarian recruitment see J. Karayannopulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (Munich, 1959), pp. 37-45.

²⁸ Ammianus 17.13.3 gives an example: in 358 the Limigantes, terrified by Julian's preparations for war, offered to submit to Roman authority, pay an annual tribute and supply "a draft of chosen youths" (*dilectumque validae iuventutis*). Cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 256-260; Grosse, pp. 206-210. Mommsen's theory that there was a distinction between *laeti* and *gentiles* and that the former were superior to the latter (pp. 259-260) does not seem tenable. *Gentiles* was used freely for all barbarians and barbarian allies (*C. J.* 1.29.5; Ammianus 25.8.13; cf. Grosse, p. 82). Most conclusive is Ammianus 20.8.13. Julian writes this to Constantius: "I shall send you *laeti* or else *dediticii* who have joined us, and you can add them to your *scholae* of *Gentiles* and *Scutarii*..." This makes

It was no doubt from such groups that a *schola* of *gentiles* was first formed. It seems to have differed from the other *scholae* in recruitment, for its original name was *gentiles scutarii*, presumably as opposed to the native *scutarii*.²⁹ Soon, however, *gentiles* entered other *scholae*. When the *Notitia Dignitatum* was compiled (ca. 425)³⁰ there were three *scholae* called simply *gentiles*.³¹

In general the names of the *scholae* show a uniformity among themselves and are significantly different from the names given similar units. Most cavalry regiments were named from the tribe or district with which they were connected, and were also given epithets derived from a special honor conferred or an imperial name or their size or, finally, their equipment.³² It is from this last type of epithet alone, usually employed only to supplement the original ethnic title, that all the names of the *scholae* were derived. This supports the other evidence which indicates that the *scholae*, or at least the original ones, were created as entirely new organizations, rather than being based on older units. The *scholae* may, however, have been modelled on the *vexillationes*, crack cavalry regiments which appeared under Diocletian and were later attached to the field army (*palatini*). Some of these units had names similar to those of the *scholae*, e.g., *scutarii*, *sagittarii*, *clibanarii*, *clibanarii scutarii*.³³

it clear that, whatever the differences which once existed between *lacti*, *dediticii* and *gentiles*, they had vanished by the fourth century.

²⁹ Ammianus 20.2.5; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 232, n. 5.

³⁰ G. Gianelli and S. Mazzarino, *Trattato di storia romana*, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 548-549.

³¹ *Not. Dig.*, Or. 6.10; Occ. 7.

³² G. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 45-49. For a more recent discussion on historical lines see K. Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung der Alen und Kohorten an Rhein und Donau* (Berne, 1951), pp. 21-42.

³³ *Not. Dig.*, Occ. 6.63, 67, 69; Or. 11.8; cf. W. Seston, *Dioclétien et la Tétrarchie* (Paris, 1946), pp. 298-299.

Hence it is not surprising that the *scholae* were organized as cavalry regiments. Our basic source for the *Rangordnung* of an *ala* is a passage of St. Jerome which lists the nine cavalry ranks (*militiae equestris officia*): *tribunus*, *primicerius*, *senator*, *ducenarius*, *centenarius*, *biarchus*, *circitor*, *eques*, *tiro*. All of these ranks are found in the *scholae* except for the last three, the lowest ranks.³⁴ This may be compared with the organization of the *schola* of *agentes in rebus*, which included the ranks from *primicerius* to *eques*.³⁵ As in the *agentes*, therefore, recruits in the *scholae* probably skipped the rank of *tiro*. *Scutarius*, *gentilis*, etc., may well have been equivalent to *eques*, and *circitor* may have been a rank in the *scholae* which is not recorded simply because of a lacuna in the evidence. This is one explanation of the absence of the three lowest ranks.

More probably, however, this absence is due to the fact that recruits entered the *scholae* with rank and pay equivalent to *circitor*. As noted above, *scholares* received higher pay from the first and very likely enjoyed some sort of NCO status. Now as early as 326 Constantine accorded the rank of *circitor* to members of the military class: « If any son of a veteran should have two horses or one suitable horse and one slave, he shall serve with the rank of *circitor*, which rank is conferred upon others only after service, and he shall receive double pay. »³⁶ The *scholares*, as we shall see in another chapter, very soon became a hereditary caste with lucrative privileges; their sons were undoubtedly able to provide themselves with two horses, and it seems quite probable that on entering the *scholae* they received privileges at least equal to those accorded the sons of other veterans. The grade of

³⁴ Hieronymus, *contra Johannem Hierosol.* 19; cf. Grosse, pp. 107-124, where evidence for use of these ranks in the *scholae* is cited.

³⁵ C. J. 12.20.3; cf. O. Hirschfeld, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1913).

³⁶ C. Th. 7.22.2 (326).

circitor was, in fact, first instituted in the fourth century and was a staff position assigned to cavalrymen who served as corporals of the guard.³⁷ It might well have been given to the emperor's guards.

Although the enlisted men of the *scholae* were on a privileged footing they were inferior in standing to other units of the guard, and during the fourth century the top officers of each *scholae* were drawn from the *domestici*. A law of Julian states that 6 allowances shall be paid each of the 50 *domestici* assigned to the *scholae*; since there were then 5 *scholae* this means 10 *domestici* in each.³⁸ This more or less agrees with what we know of the table of organization of the *agentes in rebus*, in which the top grade was assigned in the proportion of 20 per 500 men.³⁹ *Domestici* who served in the *scholae* were given special exemption from compulsory public services.⁴⁰

These *domestici*, 10 to a *schola*, are to be understood as its officers below the rank of tribune. In a passage which is basic for our knowledge of military terminology in this period, Vegetius says that « a general ought to know by name, if possible, each *comes*, *tribunus*, *domesticus* and *contubernalis*, and what each can do in war. » Therefore the *senatores*, *ducenarii* and *centenarii* of each *schola* were evidently called collectively *domestici*.⁴¹ In addition, however, every tribune of a *schola* had his personal adjutant who also bore the title *domesticus*. This officer was clearly quite separate from the *senatores*, *ducenarii* and *centenarii*, for a

³⁷ Vegetius 3.8: *Idoneos tamen tribuni et probatissimos eligunt, qui circumeant vigilias et renuntient, si qua emerit culpa quos circumitores appellabant; nunc militiae factus est gradus et circitores vocantur.*

³⁸ *C. Th.* 6.24.1; for a discussion of Babut's different interpretations see above note 21.

³⁹ *C. J.* 12.20.3; cf. O. Seeck, *PW* 1 (1894), col. 777.

⁴⁰ *C. Th.* 8.7.9.

⁴¹ Vegetius 3.10; cf. Babut (1), pp. 244-248.

tribune was strictly forbidden to appoint his adjutant (*domesticus*) from among them. Instead he was required to choose his adjutant from « the grades of rank designated by the past law. »⁴² Unfortunately this earlier law is not extant, and so we have no idea what grades it designated. It is tempting to regard the *domesticus*-adjutant as an instrument of central control like the *agentes in rebus* appointed to head the *officia* of governors and marshals,⁴³ but this view cannot be supported by direct evidence. It will be taken up for further discussion in Chapter V.

⁴² *Nov. Th.* 21.1; cf. Grosse, pp. 132-134, who argues that *domesticus* and *primicerius* were equivalent.

⁴³ W. Sinnigen, "Two Branches of the Late Roman Secret Service," *AJP* 80 (1959), pp. 238-254, has described the measures taken by the central government to maintain control over the civil and military magnates.

Chapter IV

RECRUITMENT

During the fourth century most of the *scholares* were Germans, and this was especially true of the enlisted men. Thus all the extant descriptions and representations of the emperor's guards show them with distinctly Germanic characteristics of dress and appearance, and they are often armed with the Frankish spear (*ango*).¹ At the end of the century Synesius, speaking before Emperor Arcadius, referred to the guards standing nearby as « these tall youths with curly blond hair. » Elsewhere he refers to them as Scythians—i.e., Germans—and criticizes their recruitment; the emperor's elite guard, he says, ought to be composed of men « whom our lands and cities have raised to be your defenders.... The shepherd does not guard his flock with wolves. »²

We get a good idea of how the *scholares* were recruited from a letter sent by Julian to Constantius II in 360: « I promise to send you young men to be enrolled in your *scholae* of *gentiles* and *scutarii*. Some will be from barbarian tribes settled on Roman territories (*laeti*), others will be from those foreign tribesmen who have submitted to our authority (*dediticii*). »³

¹ F. Fremersdorf, "Christliche Leibwächter auf einem geschliffenen Kölner Glasbecher des 4. Jahrhunderts," *Festschrift für Rudolf Egger*, (Klagenfurt, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 66-83.

² Synesius, *De Regno* 18 (1084A), 21-22 (1089B-1093B); cf. C. Lacombrade, *Le Discours sur la royauté* (Paris, 1951), pp. 122-124.

³ Ammianus 20.8.13.

Laeti was the general term for those tribes which had been allowed to settle on lands allotted them within the Empire; in return they were obliged to accept the rule of Roman prefects and to supply the Roman army regularly with contingents of troops. They were, in fact, subject to the authority of the generals of the high command at court (*magistri praesentes*) rather than the provincial governors. The main groups of *laeti* were Sarmatians, Franks, Carpi, Alamanni and Suebi; they were settled mainly in Gaul and north Italy. Although subjects of the Empire, these groups were separate in that they kept their tribal organization and culture. As such they therefore remained barbarians, for they were outside the city-state culture of the Empire.⁴ Ammianus records the establishment of one such community: in 370 Theodosius attacked the Alamanni and took a large number prisoner; these, by the order of Emperor Valentinian, were sent to Italy « where some fertile districts in the Po Valley were assigned to them, and these they still inhabit as subjects. »⁵

Additional troops, moreover, were drawn from tribes outside the Empire. Some provided soldiers as the price of peace, as did the Saxons in 369 and the Alamanni Lentienses in 371. The latter first surrendered to Gratian and then, « having by humble supplication obtained mercy, they furnished a reinforcement of the flower of their youth to be mingled with our recruits »; these would correspond to the category of *dediticii* mentioned by Julian in the letter quoted.⁶ Other tribes made alliances voluntarily with the Empire, and in return for protection agreed to provide contingents. They thereby entered into the Empire's *clientela*, with all the reciprocal obligations this entailed. In 359

⁴ Mommsen, GS 6, pp. 256-260; Grosse, pp. 207-210.

⁵ Ammianus 28.5.15; cf. H. Zwicky, *Zur Verwendung des Militärs in der Verwaltung der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Winterthur, 1944), pp. 11-17.

⁶ Ammianus 31.10.17 (Lentienses); 28.5.4 (Saxons).

Vadomarius, a king of the Alamanni, met Julian with official letters of recommendation from Constantius II, « and he was courteously received, as was proper with a leader who had been received by the emperor into the *clientela* of the state. » Some years later Vadomarius appears as a general in the East fighting against the Persians.⁷ Thus many tribes on both sides of the border were connected in one way or another with the Empire and the distinction between foreign and subject peoples became progressively less distinct, so much so that a modern scholar has spoken of the Empire's « invisible frontiers. »⁸

As a result of this development barbarians were recruited for all branches of the Roman army, not just the guard, and indeed during the fourth century they came to be the dominant element in the armed forces of the Empire. This was a fundamental break with the past. Barbarians had been used as auxiliaries during the Principate, but always as secondary troops, dependent on the legions and inferior to them in pay and prestige. We see this in an inscription dating from the reign of Alexander Severus, which shows *gentiles* and *laeti* serving as subordinates of a *numerus*; barbarian recruits were therefore then lower in rank than the lowest type of unit of the regular army.⁹ The situation was reversed during the third century. As early as 270 the German auxiliaries set up a splinter state on the Rhine under the usurper Laelianus;¹⁰ fifty years later barbarian troops had become the backbone of the Roman army. The forces Valentinian collected in 367 for a campaign against the Alamanni

⁷ Ammianus 18.2.16 (*in clientelam rei Romanae susceptus*); 29.1.2.

⁸ E. Kornemann, *Staaten, Völker, Männer* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 96-116.

⁹ *CIL*. XIII.6592; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 166-172; G. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 34-35, 52.

¹⁰ *SHA*, v. *Trig. tyr.* 6.2 (*ingentia auxilia Germanorum*); cf. A. Alföldi, "Die Germania als Sinnbild der kriegerischen Tugend des römischen Heeres," *Germania* 21 (1937), pp. 95-100.

consisted mainly of « a great multitude of youths from the barbarian tribes which dwell near the Rhine and also from the barbarians conquered and settled within the empire. »¹¹ When Valentinian died seven years later the government was primarily concerned as to the attitude of the barbarian cohorts in Gaul, since their loyalty was doubtful and « they looked upon themselves as the disposers of power. »¹² Perhaps the most significant indication of massive barbarian recruitment is that the « Roman » army adopted as its battle cry the *barritus*, the old cry of the Germans.¹³

Native recruits, on the other hand, proved more and more unsatisfactory. Many were physically unfit, due to the weaknesses of the conscription system. Even more serious, a general spirit of discontent and opposition made the masses of the Empire unreliable. Desertion was so common that it became necessary to tattoo recruits immediately on enlistment to prevent them from melting away into the population.¹⁴ As a result of these conditions barbarization of the army grew steadily, and by the middle of the fourth century « the more un-Roman an army unit was in recruitment and organization the higher it ranked. »¹⁵

The *scholae* were organized when this transformation was taking place, and hence it is not surprising that they, too, were largely barbarian in recruitment. Two aspects

¹¹ Zosimus 4.12. Ammianus 27.10.5 stresses the special efforts made for this campaign; hence Zosimus' account is especially notable in that he does not mention native recruitment.

¹² Ammianus 30.10.1.

¹³ Ammianus 16.12.43; 26.7.17; Vegetius 3.18; cf. M. Ihm, "Barditus," *PW* 3 (1897), coll. 10-11.

¹⁴ Vegetius 2.5; C. Th. 10.22.4; cf. Thompson, pp. 130-133; G. Gigli, "Forme di Reclutamento militare durante il Basso Imperio," *Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti Morali*, ser. 8, vol. 2 (1947), pp. 268-289.

¹⁵ Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 217, and see also pp. 247-250. For a recent discussion of the causes and character of barbarian recruitment see J. Karayannopoulos, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (Munich, 1959), pp. 37-45.

of this situation, however, should be emphasized. First, service in the *scholae* meant admittance to the military elite of the Empire and quite naturally involved the promotion of barbarian officers. Second, the barbarian recruitment of the *scholae* was very selective. These two factors were especially significant in the formation of a new officers corps.

* * *

Earlier Roman traditions had rigorously excluded barbarians from any share in the command of regular army units. The change seems to have been initiated by Constantine more or less *de novo*: « those who had for so long only taken orders now began to give them. »¹⁶ It was because he had promoted barbarians to the highest offices that Constantine was criticized by Julian as a *novator turbatorque priscarum legum*, although Julian himself had to continue the practice.¹⁷

Recruits for the *scholae*, or at least for the officers corps, were drawn mainly from one ethnic group, the Germans of the Rhine area. Thus we never hear of Sarmatians in the *scholae*, although Constantine had settled 300,000 within the Empire and they supplied contingents to the army.¹⁸ Probably this policy dates from the successful campaign of 312 when Constantine conquered Italy at the head of an army recruited in Gaul « from the barbarians whom he had subdued, of both Germanic and Celtic tribes » (Zosimus). Even more conclusive

16 M. Bang, *Die Germanen in Römischen Dienste bis zur Regierung Constantins* (Berlin, 1906), p. 93; cf. pp. 88-94 for a full discussion of the reign of Constantine as a turning point, and also A. Schenk v. Stauffenberg, *Das Imperium und die Völkerwanderung* (Munich, 1946), pp. 22-27. There is, however, the case of a frontier commander of barbarian origin as early as 303; *CIL* III.10981 (*Aurelius Ianuarius, Batavus, vir perfectissimus, dux Pannoniae secundae...*).

17 Ammianus 21.10.8; cf. 21.12.25.

18 *Anon. Vales.* 32; *Not. Dig.*, Occ. 42.46-47, indicates that the Sarmatae were largely settled in Italy and were under the authority of the Marshal of Infantry.

is the evidence of the Arch of Constantine, which shows several distinct groups within Constantine's army: Regulars, Moors and Cornuti. The last group is distinguished by helmets with goat-horns, a clearly Germanic emblem, and members of this group receive a prominent place in the frieze portraying Constantine's siege of Verona and entry into Rome. The important role of the Cornuti in the fourth century is demonstrated by the fact that their war cry, the *barritus*, was eventually adopted by the whole army. The prominence of the Cornuti was part of a general shift to recruitment of Gallic and Germanic tribesmen and their incorporation into the elite units which took the place of the praetorians as the emperor's field army, the *auxilia palatina*.¹⁹

Of all the barbarian groups in the service of the Empire during the fourth century, the Franks were by far the most prominent. Indeed, by the middle of the century so many Franks held leading positions at court and in the army that a plot was formed against them. It was directed primarily against Silvanus, the general in command of the armies in Gaul, and his friends. No doubt personal rivalries played a role, but Ammianus' account makes it clear that there was a distinctly « anti-Frankish » aspect to the episode, and it indicates their prominent role at court. When one of Silvanus' friends realized that incriminating letters had been forged, « he called a meeting of the Franks, of whom there were then a great many serving at court, and he described at length the plot by which their lives were threatened. »²⁰

Among these Franks at court were two commanders of the *scholae*: Malarich, tribune of the *gentiles*, and Mallobaudes,

¹⁹ On Constantine's army see Zosimus 2.15 and H. L'Orange and A. v. Gerkan, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (Berlin, 1939), pp. 41-43. On the Cornuti see A. Alföldi, "Cornuti," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), pp. 169-179 (role in Constantine's army), and Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 239-240 (*barritus* and *auxilia palatina*).

²⁰ Ammianus 15.5.11.

tribune of the *armaturae*. Ammianus' account also makes it seem that the tribune of the arms factory at Cremona was also a Frank, and we learn in passing that Silvanus' adjutant was a Frank who had previously served on the staff of the Emperor Constans. Malarich and Mallobaudes continued to serve with honor despite the plot. The former was appointed by Jovian in 363 as commander of the forces in Gaul, making him the third-ranking general in the West. Mallobaudes, « king of the Franks, a brave man and a lover of battle, » had been sent by Constantius II in 354 to interrogate the Caesar Gallus, a very delicate mission. His colleagues were the grand chamberlain and one of the imperial secretaries, so he was even then in high favor. By 377 he had risen to the post of Count of the Domestics, the third-ranking military post, and in that year he was sent to Gaul as joint commander of a large force mustered to meet the Alaman invasion. His colleague, who actually held the Gallic command, wished to avoid battle, but Mallobaudes had the authority to overrule him. The careers of those two men indicate that the efforts made to block the power of the Franks failed, and they were not involved in Silvanus' fall. Ammianus probably reflects the opinion of those who knew the facts when he says that Silvanus and his friends were loyal to the Empire.²¹

It was in fact during the forty years following the Silvanus affair that Frankish generals came to dominate the military and political life of the Empire. On the death of Valentinian I the generals who established his younger son as emperor were led by Merobaudes, a Frankish general and the only man not of an imperial family to hold the consulship

²¹ Ammianus 15.5-6 (Silvanus affair); 25.8.11 (Malarich); 14.11.21, 31.10.6-7 (Mallobaudes); 15.5.6 (*homines dicatos imperio*). Cf. C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, (Paris, 1926), vol. 7, pp. 166-169; W. den Boer, "The Emperor Silvanus and His Army," *Acta Classica* 3 (1960), pp. 105-109.

twice in the fourth century. Among his colleagues in the high command were Mallobaudes, Bauto, Richomer, Malarith, Nannienus and Arbogastes: all Franks. Eventually Arbogastes became *generalissimo* of the Western Empire's armed forces and gave all military appointments to his Frankish companions, with the acquiescence and even support of the native aristocracy and civil service.²² « The power and grandeur of the empire depended on the fidelity of these Franks. » Roman in loyalties and often in culture, they were accepted as colleagues and friends by the Roman aristocracy. Perhaps the most signal example of this was the marriage of Bauto's daughter with the Emperor Arcadius.²³

This marriage offers a clue to the unique position of the Franks, for despite the number and importance of the barbarians settled within the Empire they were strictly forbidden to intermarry with Romans. As late as 370 this was reiterated by Valentinian in an edict; transgressors were threatened with capital punishment.²⁴ How, then, could the Emperor marry the daughter of a pagan Frank just twenty-five years later? We would expect at least to hear some comment on this breach of law.

The answer to this is provided by a precept attributed to Constantine, « that never shall an emperor of the Romans ally himself in marriage with a native of customs differing from and alien to those of the Roman order, especially with one that is infidel and unbaptized, unless it be with the Franks alone; for they alone were excepted by that great

²² Greg. Tur., *Historia Francorum* 2.9; cf. Jullian, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-315.

²³ Jullian, *op. cit.*, p. 281 (quote); cf. pp. 275-281; S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 2nd ed. (London, 1899), pp. 295-298; K. Strohecker, "Zur Rolle der Heermeister frankischer Abstammung in spätem vierten Jahrhundert," *Historia* 4 (1955), pp. 314-330, describes the general development and in particular documents the high social standing of Bauto.

²⁴ C. Th. 3.14.1 (370).

man, the holy Constantine... for there is much relationship and converse between Franks and Romans. »²⁵

It seems, in fact, that a particular tribe, the Salian Franks, had a special link with the Empire going back to the reign of Constantius I. That ruler settled them on the Rhine delta, where the Batavians, also *foederati* of the Empire, had formerly lived, and in return they provided contingents of soldiers. This alliance must have been an important institution for it is mentioned several times by the panegyrists, most notably in a speech addressed to Constantine in which his father's outstanding achievements are discussed: « Who does not remember all he did to strengthen the empire?... Those Frankish people who had not attacked the empire he summoned from their homeland and settled them in the deserted areas of Gaul. Now they increase the wealth of the

²⁵ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio* 13; see edition of G. Moravcsik and R. Jenkins (2 vols., Budapest and London, 1949-1962), vol. 1, p. 71. In his commentary on the passage Jenkins casts doubt on the authenticity of this tradition, calling the references to Constantine a "conscious fiction" (vol. 2, p. 63) and citing the view of another scholar that the exception made in favor of the Franks was related to the diplomatic parity accorded Charlemagne in 814 (*ibid.*, p. 67). However, as Jenkins himself points out, by the time of Constantine VII marriage with barbarians of all sorts, not just Franks, was accepted as politically expedient: "the proudest emperors made very little trouble about doing what Constantine here reprobrates" (*ibid.*). During this period Byzantine princesses married princes of Bulgaria (927), Russia (989) and Holland; cf. L. Brehier, *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1949), pp. 38-39. Furthermore, at the very time when Constantine VII was writing *De administrando imperio*, A.D. 951-952 (Moravcsik and Jenkins, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 5), a sharp rivalry was developing between the Byzantine and Western (Frankish) Empires, and in 968 a marriage alliance offered by Otto I was "regarded as derisive and derisively rejected": G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1957), p. 258. For all these reasons the exception made in favor of the Franks, and only the Franks, cannot be explained by contemporary considerations, and due weight must be given to the explanation given by Constantine VII himself: "they alone were excepted by that great man, the holy Constantine, because he himself drew his origin from those parts": Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio* 13, tr. by Moravcsik and Jenkins, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 71.

empire by their farming, and they sustain our armies by providing recruits. »²⁶ Soon after the alliance was formed the Franks gave proof of their loyalty, rendering outstanding service to Constantine in the civil wars under the leadership of Bonitus.²⁷ Silvanus was the son of Bonitus; he entered the *scholae*, rose to be tribune of the *armaturae* and then general, and was a Roman in his culture and loyalties. Thus he represents perfectly the Frankish elite which supported the house of Constantine and with his triumph formed the core of a new military aristocracy, based on the army and palace guards and quite separate from the civil services, which remained the preserve of the native aristocracy.²⁸

A second group of barbarian officers, though of lesser importance, was formed by Alamanni. With them, too, the link seems to have been established by Constantius I, as is indicated by the circumstances surrounding his son's accession. Constantine at his father's death was only about twenty-five years old; he was able to gain the throne, we are told, largely through the support of Crocus, king of the Alamanni, « who had joined the court of Constantius as an ally. »²⁹ Under Constantius II in particular the Alamanni were very prominent. In 354 among the Alamans at court there were:

²⁶ *Paneg.* 7.6 (7.5 describes Constantius' action in driving enemies of the Empire out of the Batavian territories; this explains the subsequent reference to deserted areas). Cf. *Paneg.* 4.8-9; Jullian, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, pp. 84-88, and vol. 8, pp. 88-89. This policy was continued by the Emperor Julian, who made alliances with other tribes of Franks, and by Gratian, who entrusted to them the defense of northeastern Gaul. Cf. Ammianus 17.8.4; H. Nesselhauf, "Die spätömische Verwaltung der gallischgermanischen Länder," *Abh. preuss. Akademie, phil.-hist. Klasse*, 1938, no. 2, pp. 64-65.

²⁷ Ammianus 15.5.33.

²⁸ C. Balducci, "La rebellione del generale Silvano nelle Gallie," *Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti Morali*, ser. 8, vol. 2 (1947), pp. 423-427.

²⁹ *Epit. de Caes.* 41.3; cf. Stauffenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Constantine's age at accession has been variously estimated between 18 and 28 years. Stein (1), p. 451, n. 87, reviews the evidence.

Latinus, Count of the Domestics; Agilo, tribune of the imperial stables; and Scudilo, tribune of the *scutarii*. These men were important members of the high command; « they were looked upon as pillars of the state. »³⁰ These officers were part of the Emperor's personal staff, and as such were entertained at the « divine imperial banquets. »³¹ Agilo later became tribune of the *scutarii* and then, when Constantius grew suspicious of Ursicinus, was promoted to general in command of the East, « an unusual promotion, since before he had been only a tribune »; he was clearly a trusted favorite.³² Scudilo, likewise, enjoyed Constantius' confidence, for he had been sent to Gallus to deceive him into coming voluntarily to court.³³ Most surprising of all, King Vadomar entered the Roman service and rose to be frontier commander in Phoenicia.³⁴

After Constantius II, however, the recruitment of Alamanni seems to have decreased. Very likely this was due to the repeated incursions of Alaman tribes and the harsh reprisals exacted by the Romans, beginning with Constantius II's great expedition in 354.³⁵ Conflicts with the Alamanni continued, and in 365, when they launched a formidable invasion in conjunction with the usurpation of Procopius, Valentinian ignored Procopius and marched against the Alamanni because « Procopius was the foe of himself and his brother alone, while the Alamanni were enemies of the whole Roman world. »³⁶ As a result of these conflicts the loyalty of Alamanni in the imperial service came into question, and indeed

³⁰ Ammianus 14.10.8.

³¹ *C. Th.* 6.13.1 (413).

³² Ammianus 20.2.5 and 21.12.16; cf. Jullian, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, p. 90.

³³ Ammianus 14.11.11.

³⁴ Ammianus 21.3.5.

³⁵ Ammianus 14.10; cf. Jullian, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, pp. 161-165.

³⁶ Ammianus 26.5.13; cf. Symmachus, *Oratio* 1.17-21; A. Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1952), p. 49.

a number were found to have aided their compatriots. Thus in 377 Gratian's plan to transfer troops to the East to aid Valens was revealed to the Alamanni by one of their number serving in the *scutarii*, and they then seized the opportunity to invade the Empire when its defenses were weakened. Because of such incidents the number of Alamanni in the *scholae* and officers corps declined sharply in the latter fourth century.³⁷

A third group of barbarian officers was formed by noblemen who did not have any hereditary link with the Empire but instead came as volunteers or refugees, were welcomed at court with the honors due their high birth, and were taken into the emperor's service. An example of this was Vadomar, already mentioned. Another was Hormisdas, a prince of Persia who was forced in 324 to flee because of a palace revolution; he was received by Constantine « with every honor and the respect due his rank. » He was given command of a cavalry unit and played an important role in the Persian campaigns of the next thirty-five years. When Constantius II made his great ceremonial entry into Rome in 356, Hormisdas was at his side.³⁸ His son was named proconsul of Asia by the usurper Procopius and later served as general under Theodosius.³⁹

Other foreign nobles rose to high positions at court. We have already mentioned Mallobaudes, at once king of the Franks and Count of the Domestics. One of his successors as Count of the Domestics was Bacurius, an Iberian prince, who commanded a troop of archers attached to the court in the battle of Adrianople; eventually he rose to be

³⁷ Ammianus 31.10.3-4; 14.10.8; 29.4.7; cf. Julian, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, p. 280, n. 3.

³⁸ Zosimus 2.27 (reception by Constantine); Ammianus 16.10.16 (with Constantius in Rome).

³⁹ Ammianus 26.8.12 and Zosimus 4.7 (Procopius); Zosimus 4.30 (Theodosius).

Theodosius' Count of Domestics and was second in command at Frigidus. In his case, too, the link between his family and the Empire went back to Constantine.⁴⁰ Richomer and Arbogastes were of the highest rank among the Franks.⁴¹ And we hear of Valentinian sending a king of the Bucinobantes to Britain with the authority of a tribune and giving two nobles of this nation commands in his army.⁴²

This use of barbarian nobles in both the guards and the army was part of a general policy. Sharp class divisions existed within the barbarian tribes, and the Romans preferred to ally themselves with the nobility. Ammianus distinguishes between kings, chieftains and princes on the one hand—*optimates*—and their attendants, who followed them on foot.⁴³ Always the Empire aimed at the nobility. « Rome liked to reach understandings with kings and princes, not with the peoples, and helped the nobles by conferring on them Roman citizenship and diadems. »⁴⁴ Constantine gave a new impetus to this through his use of barbarian contingents under their own commanders. In the barbarian com-

⁴⁰ Ammianus 31.12.16 (tribune of *sagittarii*, probably the *schola* of *scutarii sagittarii* since they, along with a *schola* of *scutarii*, are escorting the Count of Domestics); Zosimus 4.48 (general at Frigidus); Socrates 1.20 and Sozomen 2.7 (Constantine and Iberians); Rufinus, *HE* 10.11 (double rank: *gentis ipsius rex et apud nos domesticorum comes*). Cf. E. A. Thompson, "The Passio S. Sabae and Early Visigothic Society," *Historia* 4 (1956), pp. 331-338.

⁴¹ Ammianus 31.12.15; Greg. Tur. 2.9.

⁴² Ammianus 29.4.7.

⁴³ Ammianus 16.12.23 (*Chonodomarius et Serapio potestate excelsiores ante alios reges*); 18.2.13 (*reges omnes et regales et regulos*); 31.12.13 (*imperator... optimates poscens idoneos mitti*).

⁴⁴ Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102; cf. Bang, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-16, and E. A. Thompson, "The Settlement of the Barbarians in Southern Gaul," *JRS* 46 (1956), pp. 65-75, suggesting that the imperial government introduced Visigoth settlers into Aquitaine as an act of policy, because they could be depended upon to crush the insurgent peasants (*bacaudae*). This would be then the culmination of a long history of close relations between the Roman and Germanic aristocracies. See also his "The Visigoths from Fritigern to Enric," *Historia* 12 (1963), pp. 105-126.

munities settled on imperial territory the nobles were recognized as the governing class. Constantine especially seems to have stressed this policy and kept many foreign nobles around himself at court. Some were sent as hostages; others had been induced to enter his service by splendid gifts and high honors.⁴⁵ It was only natural, therefore, for the Romans to use them as officers.⁴⁶

Indeed military affairs in the fourth century seem to have had a decidedly aristocratic flavor. Just before the battle of Adrianople Fritigern sent ambassadors to ask for peace. Valens, however, « was offended at the lowness of their rank, and replied that if they wished to make a lasting treaty they must send him nobles of sufficient dignity. » Later Valens sent as his own envoy Richomer, bearing proofs of his rank and noble birth.⁴⁷ With this background it is easy to see that the barbarian officers of the guard were of noble birth, partly because this fitted them the better to command and partly because the emperors regarded this as appropriate for members of their court.

* * *

However, the members of the *scholae*, or at least the officers, were not all of barbarian origins. In the pages of Ammianus we come upon a number of officers of the guard who were of Roman birth: Herculianus, Romanus and Vincentius, Jovian, Equitius, Valentinian, Valens, Masaucio, and Ammianus himself.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.7.

⁴⁶ Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Jullian, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, pp. 88-91. *C. Th.* 7.13.16 (406) refers to the federated allies and their "lords" (*fœderatorum... cum dominis*).

⁴⁷ Ammianus 31.12.13, 15.

⁴⁸ Ammianus 14.10.2 (Herculianus); 22.11.2 (Romanus and Vincentius: the names seem unmistakably Roman); 25.5.4 (Jovian); 26.1.4 (Equitius: he could not have been proposed for election as emperor had he not been a Roman; cf.

Most of these officers were the sons of veterans. As part of the general mobilization of society a caste system was established under the Later Empire. The rule was that « sons shall succeed into the station of their fathers, » and no person was to escape from the hereditary duties imposed by his *condicio nascendi*.⁴⁹ As early as 313 it was accepted fact that veterans' sons were subject to compulsory military duties; some had cut off fingers to evade this.⁵⁰ Soldiers' sons were strictly enjoined from entering the civil service.⁵¹ They were regarded as « supernumeraries » (*accrescentes*) and were entered on the military rolls several years before they were old enough to actually serve.⁵² Aetius, for example, who was the son of a general and married the daughter of a Count of the Domestics, was attached to the court with officer's rank when a youth of fourteen or less, although normally veterans' sons did not begin active duty until at least the age of twenty.⁵³ The sons of *domestici* were especially privileged; not only were they enrolled while still children, but they received four subsistence allowances. This was a lucrative privilege; the sons of cavalymen received only two subsistence allowances

Philostorgius 11.2); 26.1.5 (Valentinian); 26.4.2 (Valens: Zosimus 4.2 indicates his rank in the guards was *protector domesticus*); 26.5.14 (Masauccio); 19.8.6 (Am-mianus); cf. Jones (1), p. 135.

⁴⁹ C. Th. 7.22.3 (326); 7.21.3 (396).

⁵⁰ C. Th. 7.22.1 (313).

⁵¹ C. Th. 7.22.6-10 (349-380).

⁵² C. Th. 7.1.11 (372); 7.1.14 (394); cf. O. Seeck, "Adrescens no. 2," *PW* 1 (1894), col. 349.

⁵³ Aetius was a *puero praetorianus*: Gregory of Tours, *H. Fr.* 2.8. Since in 405-6 he was one of two highborn youths sent to Alaric as hostages he probably had his rank then, and at that time he was about 14; cf. Stein (1), pp. 283 and 551, n. 159, for dates. Aetius was probably entered on the *matricula* of the service headed by the *comes sacri stabuli*, for which the term *praetorianus* in the case of Stilicho is attested; cf. Stein (2), p. 798. Usually veterans' sons were inducted when 20 to 25 years of age: C. Th. 7.22.2. (326). They were, however, examined sometime between the ages of 16 and 18, and might be inducted then if found fit: C. Th. 12.1.19 (331); 7.22.4 (343); 7.22.5 (333).

when they began active service.⁵⁴ Most officers had high connections. Herculianus, for example, *protector* on the staff of Constantius II, was the son of a general of the cavalry.⁵⁵ Not all officers in the guards rose through connections, however; Vitalianus, a soldier in the Eruli, was promoted from *miles* to *domesticus* and eventually reached the rank of count.⁵⁶ Hence the statement of a law that « persons enrolled in the *protectores* and *domestici* arrive at this position by various routes. »⁵⁷ In general, however, our evidence indicates that Vitalianus was a rare case. By the middle of the fourth century a new military aristocracy had been formed to take the place of the old, with recognized status and prestige. Sons of veterans were « of military stock, » « of the military class. »⁵⁸ Within this class an officer's son was « recommended by his father's reputation (*commendabilis*), » and this was clearly a great advantage.⁵⁹ Some examples of officers with important connections have already been mentioned, and the events of the latter fourth century indicated that the highest post of all—that of emperor—was within the reach of officers who were *commendabilis*. When Julian died in 363 there was no designated heir and so the court ministers and marshals were free to choose a successor. First they chose Jovian, son of a general, son-in-law of another and himself senior *domesticus* at the time; we are

⁵⁴ C. Th. 6.24.2 (365); 7.22.2 (326).

⁵⁵ Ammianus 14.10.2. From the context it is clear that Herculianus was a *protector domesticus* who had been dispatched on an important intelligence mission, namely, to report on the activities of the Caesar Gallus.

⁵⁶ Ammianus 25.10.9.

⁵⁷ C. Th. 6.24.3 (365).

⁵⁸ C. Th. 7.22.7 (373) and 7.22.9 (380): *castrensi stirpe*; Aurelius Victor 42.15: *Silvanus ortus barbaria parentibus ordine militiae*.

⁵⁹ Ammianus 25.5.4: *Iovanus eligitur imperator... paternis meritis mediocriter commendabilis*; 31.13.18: *tribunus Potentius... meritis Ursicini patris magistri quondam armorum suisque commendabilis*.

explicitly told that he was « known to the soldiers more for his father's reputation (*commendatio*) than his own. »⁶⁰ Then on Jovian's death he was succeeded by Valentinian, also the son of a guard who had risen to be general, and at the time commander of the *schola secunda scutariorum*; « because of his father's reputation he had been brought into notice from early youth. »⁶¹ Jovian had been *protector domesticus* at thirty and *senior domesticus* at thirty-two; Valentinian was a tribune at thirty-six and his brother Valens was *protector domesticus* at thirty-five.⁶² These men had undoubtedly been entered on the rolls of a guards unit when children, as authorized by imperial edict (*C. Th.* 6.24.2), and so gained a long headstart in the race for seniority and promotion. This must have caused resentment among less well-connected veterans, and by the end of the century edicts appear favoring men « who have performed the actual duties of the imperial service » as against those « who have entered their names on the rolls of the imperial service. »⁶³

No doubt the most famous *accrescens* was the soldier who entered history as St. Martin of Tours. He was the son of a tribune in the Pannonian army, and at the age

⁶⁰ Eutropius 10.17: *consensu exercitus lectus est, commendatione patris militibus quam sua notior*; Ammianus 25.5.4 (quoted above in note 59) uses almost the same expression.

⁶¹ Ammianus 26.1.5; 30.7.4: *Cuius meritis Valentinianus ab incunte adulescentia commendabilis*; Epit. 45.3: *ob cuius apud milites commendationem Valentiniano imperium resistenti oggeritur*.

⁶² O. Seeck, "Iovanus no. 1," *PW* 9 (1916), col. 2006; A. Nagl, "Valens" and "Valentinianus no. 1," *PW* 7A (1948), coll. 2097, 2158.

⁶³ *C. Th.* 7.3.1 (393); 7.3.2 (409). These edicts recognized the privileges already in fact enjoyed by the new military aristocracy. Jones (1), p. 180, seems to regard the order of developments as the reverse of this, and to place the formation of the new aristocracy in the fifth rather than the fourth century: "In the reigns of Arcadius and Theodosius II a hereditary aristocracy was beginning to form from the sons and grandsons of the new men who had risen to the top in the fourth century." His examples concern the civil service.

of fifteen his father had him enrolled in the army, as required by law. Several years later (at eighteen or twenty-two; the manuscripts differ) he entered on active duty in the *scholae*. Soon afterwards he was converted, and was only dissuaded from leaving the service by the arguments of his commander; the tone of this episode indicates that Martin was an officer. After twenty years of service he asked for and received his discharge.⁶⁴

It should be noted here that the descendants of *scholares* were a special group within the military class. The municipal food rations conferred on *scholares* by Constantine were transmitted by succession to their heirs; but to receive them the heirs had to be home owners.⁶⁵ Evidently they formed a prosperous class, and perhaps this is the reason why we know of no serving soldier from this group.

* * *

Sons of decurions formed a second group of Roman officers. The compulsory services required of the decurion class became ever more ruinous during the fourth century, and as a result more and more members of the class sought escape by entering the civil service. Our best evidence of this is the series of edicts directed against it, beginning with a law of 326 against decurions « who are running away to the legions and various government offices, » and culminating in an edict of 416 directing that decurion descent should be grounds for dismissal from the army.⁶⁶ Several laws specifically forbid the presence of decurions among the *scholares* and *domestici*.⁶⁷ But the very number of these laws indicates

⁶⁴ Sulpicius Severus, *v. Martini*, 203; cf. E. Griffe, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine* (Paris, 1947), vol. 1, pp. 199-205, which reviews the problems of chronology.

⁶⁵ *C. Th.* 14.7.9-13 (389-396).

⁶⁶ *C. Th.* 12.1.13 (326); 12.1.147 (416).

⁶⁷ *C. Th.* 12.1.38 (357); 12.1.88 (382).

the importance and persistence of the tendency of decurions to gain admittance into the army.

Ammianus Marcellinus is of course the most famous example of this tendency. He came from a prosperous family of Antioch, received a traditional rhetorical education, and was the friend of Libanius and other worthies of the city. In 353, when about twenty-three, he was assigned to the staff of Ursicinus, commander in the West, with the rank of *protector domesticus*. Although he does not seem to have been promoted above this rank, his history shows that he moved in the highest political and social circles of the Empire. His account of the purge conducted by Valens is based on personal observation, so he probably served a full twenty years.⁶⁸

A few other examples of decurion officers are known. Among these we may reckon two officers of the guard who rose to be ecclesiastical leaders, Marcian and Eleusius. The first was a learned man and served not only as Novatian bishop of Constantinople but also as preceptor of Valens' daughters. Eleusius was bishop of Cyzicus and a prominent figure in the theological dissensions of his age. Both of them, on the basis of the education these activities imply, were very likely of decurion origin.⁶⁹ Another such case is the Paeonius to whom Synesius addressed a eulogy, an officer of the guard who knew « both how to think well and how to command men. »⁷⁰ His learning and his friendship with the anti-barbarian leaders make it almost certain that he was of the decurion class.

Positive documentation is available in the case of Firminus, a student of Libanius who chose the military career

⁶⁸ Ammianus 19.8.6 (born *ingenuus*); 14.9.1 (assigned to Ursicinus' staff); 29.1.24 (eyewitness to Valens' cruelties); cf. Thompson, pp. 1-9.

⁶⁹ Socrates 4.9 and Sozomen 6.9 (Marcian); Sozomen 4.20 (Eleusius).

⁷⁰ Synesius, *De astrolabio*, Migne PG 66, col. 1580; cf. C. Lacombrade, *Synesios de Cyrène* (Paris, 1951), pp. 123-124.

and served a full twenty-year term. Libanius regarded this as an unfortunate waste of talent, and a letter of St. Basil expresses condemnation in no uncertain terms. St. Basil writes to Firminus: « I am pained to hear that you plan to leave your ancestral post of duty.... I exhort you to forget this, for it is a shameful idea. Say goodbye to these ideas of military service and the cares of battle and camps, and return to your native city and take up the life of a decurion, your inherited position.... If you persist in this, tell me of the calamity personally and not by letter. »⁷¹ This reflects the official ideology which insisted that the middle class must not attempt to escape its burdens. Hence, no doubt, the few examples of this type of soldier recorded in our sources. But there was also a cultural barrier; the military profession was regarded as unworthy of an educated man, whereas the civil service was not. Hence we find a number of Libanius' students in the palatine bureaus, although this was just as illegal as service in the army; and Libanius was glad to write asking for exemptions from the laws governing decurions in order that they might continue.⁷²

Finally there was a small number of Roman officers who had risen from the ranks. Arbetio was outstanding in having risen from enlisted man to marshal, but we also hear of Maurus and Gratian the Elder, who rose to the guard and then were promoted to *comes*, and the father of St. Martin, who rose to an army tribunate.⁷³ Whatever their national origins these men were Roman in that they owed their promotion to excellence within Roman units rather than

⁷¹ St. Basil, *Ep.* 116 (Migne PG 32, coll. 532-533); cf. P. Petit, *Les Étudiants de Libanius* (Paris, 1957), pp. 126-127.

⁷² Libanius, *Ep.* 795 (to Antiochus VIII); cf. Petit, *op. cit.*, p. 152. Epp. 358-359 (to Honoratius, *notarius*); cf. O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 344.

⁷³ Ammianus 16.6.1 (Arbetio); 31.10.21 (Maurus); 30.7.7 and *CIL* XII.900 (Gratian); Sulpicius Severus, *v. Mart.* 2 (father of St. Martin).

federated troops. There were not many of them during the fourth century, but towards the end their number must have become significant, especially in the East. After Adrianople the commander in Asia Minor was able to have all the Goths quartered in the area massacred, because all his subordinates were Roman. Ammianus adds that « this is a rare thing in these days, » but clearly it was only possible because of a growing distrust of barbarian—or, rather, federated—troops.⁷⁴

* * *

In conclusion, it may be said that during the fourth century a new military machine and a new military nobility were created, and the core of this new class was the *scholae palatinae*. Its enlisted ranks seem to have been composed largely, if not entirely, of German tribesmen, bound to the person of Constantine and his successors by ties of personal loyalty rather than patriotism. Its officer corps, like that of the Empire's army as a whole, was made up primarily of barbarian nobles from federated tribes and the sons of Roman officers, young men who were *commendabiles*. These officers enjoyed great advantages as to status, seniority and promotion. During the second half of the century, after the end of Constantine's dynasty, *commendabiles* reached the throne in the persons of Jovian and Valentinian, and in general they dominated the Empire during the following century.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ammianus 31.16.8.

⁷⁵ MacMullen, pp. 176-177, discusses the general significance of the militarization of the Later Empire.

Chapter V

PROTECTORES ET DOMESTICI

Absolutism and centralization marked the Later Empire, and all those who, like the *scholares*, served in the palace shared a special status and special privileges by virtue of their proximity to the centers of power. One group in particular, the *protectores domestici*, was especially connected with the *scholae* and deserves discussion here.

The *scholae* and the corps of *domestici* themselves formed part of a larger group of organizations which were all attached to the emperor's personal staff and were therefore connected with the imperial palace, as opposed to those government organizations connected with an imperial ministry or a provincial authority. All who served « within the Sacred Palace » enjoyed certain privileges and were classed together as *palatini*.¹ As early as 313 an edict of Constantine granted exemption from compulsory public services to all *palatini*, « both those who have performed their duties in Our personal service and those who have served in Our bureaus. »² In a later edict the Emperor enumerates the categories of his high officials as judges, counts, friends and *palatini*; the latter category therefore included all who served within the palace except for a few close associates, as opposed to the governors and commanders in the provinces.³ The

¹ C. Th. 6.35; C.J. 12.28; cf. W. Ensslin, "Palatini," *PW* 18 (1942), coll. 2535-2539 for this and what follows.

² C. Th. 6.35.1 (319).

³ C. Th. 9.1.4 (325).

distinction goes back at least to the Tetrarchy, for we are told that Diocletian wished to limit persecution of the Christians to officials of the palace and those in the provinces, and the first group is called *palatini*.⁴

Palatini were all soldiers in status, and all enjoyed certain military privileges such as the soldier's right to dispose freely of his military estate (*peculium*).⁵ However, there was a distinction between civilian and military *palatini*, the civil servants in the palace bureaus as opposed to the soldiers in the *scholae* and *protectores domestici*.⁶ These two bodies were closed to most members of the civil service, and were clearly set apart in one category at the apex of the military establishment.⁷

There were, however, differences between the two corps in status and function: The *scholares* were under the Master of the Offices and were charged primarily with protecting the emperor and palace, while the *protectores domestici* were commanded by the Count of the Domestics, served as the emperor's staff officers, and held higher rank.⁸ This distinction seems to go back to the period immediately after the death

⁴ Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 11.3; cf. J. Moreau, ed., *De mortibus persecutorum* (Paris, 1954), p. 269 *ad loc.* Although there is evidence that under the Tetrarchy the term *palatini* was already coming into use for crack field units (Ensslin, *op. cit.*, col. 2531), parallel accounts of Diocletian's persecution indicate Lactantius was clearly referring to members of the Emperor's staff. Cf. Eusebius, *HE* 8.6, where the first martyrs are described as "Dorotheus and the imperial servants (βασιλικούς παῖδας) that were with him," and "Dorotheus and Gorgonius, together with many others of the imperial household" (τῆς βασιλικῆς οἰκετίας). Gorgonius, because he was both a native Roman and a eunuch by birth, was a highly unusual specimen, and was therefore taken into Diocletian's "family" (οἰκειώσασθαι), that is, the Emperor's private service. Cf. Eusebius, *HE* 7.32.3; Jones (2), p. 567.

⁵ *C. Th.* 6.36.1 (326).

⁶ *C. Th.* 12.1.38 (357): *nomen dederunt militiae aut palatinis sunt officiis adgregati....*

⁷ *C. Th.* 8.7.9 (366).

⁸ Mommsen, *GS* 8, pp. 435, 440; Grosse, pp. 93-96, 139-141; Jones (2), pp. 636-640.

of Aurelian. That ruler, as discussed above, had a guard of *protectores*. Later the title of *protector* was given to a large group of officers, and those who served on the emperor's staff were set apart as officers of his household by the title *protectores domestici* or simply *domestici*.⁹ Diocletian at his accession was commander of the *domestici*; at Galerius' court they were ranked with the high officials of the palace (*domestici et administratores*); and the great persecution of 303 was directed first against the Christian officers of the imperial household.¹⁰

* * *

The *domestici* were organized in a *schola* (*protectorum domesticorum*)¹¹ commanded by the Count of the Domestics; this general had cabinet rank on a level with the Master of the Offices and stood just below the field marshals (*magistri militum*) in the military hierarchy.¹² The *protectores*, on the other hand, were not organized separately but instead were under the authority of the field marshals (*magistri militum*). This is made perfectly clear by comparing two consecutive laws of the Theodosian Code: the first concerns the promotion of *domestici* and is addressed to the Count of Domestics; the second concerns promotion of *protectores* and is addressed to a *magister militum*. Just as earlier some

⁹ Grosse, pp. 138-139; Mommsen, GS 8, p. 434, shows the variation in nomenclature.

¹⁰ Aur. Vict. 39.1, accepted by W. Ensslin, "Valerianus no. 142," *PW* 7A (1948), col. 2422; Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 22.3; Eusebius, *HE* 8.1.3, 8.6.5.

¹¹ *C. Th.* 6.24.3 (365): *Sicuti variis itineribus protectorum domesticorum schola...*; Ammianus 26.5.3 (365): *Serneianus... domesticorum praefuit scholae.*

¹² In the *Notitia Dignitatum* the Counts of Domestics are listed among the *illustres* (Or. 15, Occ. 13) and therefore had cabinet rank; cf. Jones (2), p. 528. They came last in the list of *illustres*, after the *magistri militum*, and in fact Ammianus records several instances of a *comes domesticorum* being promoted to *magister militum*; cf. O. Seeck, "Comites no. 25," *PW* 4 (1901), coll. 648-650.

protectores were assigned to the praetorian prefects and others to the emperor's staff, so from the time of Constantine some were assigned to the field marshals (*magistri*) and others to the Count of Domestics.¹³

Protectores were also assigned to commanders in the provinces and were used for various administrative tasks and special missions. We know, for example, of a *protector* in Egypt who was sent by the prefect to an *epistrategos* with an official letter concerning the collection of grain for the Alexandrian shipments.¹⁴ Ammianus records the career of one Antoninus, who began as a wealthy merchant, became superintendent of the accounts for the *dux* of Mesopotamia, was promoted to *protector*, and then defected to the Persians. He was able to bring with him information concerning the strength and distribution of all Roman troops in the East, clear evidence of the importance of his position.¹⁵ Best known of all is the career of Abinnaeus, who earned the rank of *protector* by leading an embassy from the Blemyes to Constantinople. He then escorted the Blemyes home and was next given the mission of accompanying recruits from the Thebaid to Hierapolis.¹⁶ These examples help explain a passing statement by Ammianus concerning the reprisals exacted by the Persians after Amida fell: the count and tribunes were crucified, « and Jacobus and Caesius, finance officers (*numerarii*) from the staff of Marshal of the Cavalry, and

¹³ C. Th. 6.24.5 (392) and 6.24.6 (395); cf. Babut (2), p. 252; Grosse, p. 140; Stein (1), p. 123.

¹⁴ P. Amh. 137 (*The Amherst Papyri*, ed. B. Grenfell and A. Hunt, 2 vols., London, 1900-1901, vol. 2, p. 167).

¹⁵ Ammianus 18.5.1-2. W. Ensslin, "Numerarius," *PW* 17 (1937), coll. 1302-1303, points out that at this time (A.D. 359) the financial officer of a *dux* was still outside the regular official ranks. It was after having served the *dux* that Antoninus was promoted to protector (*rationarius... ducis, tunc protector*: Ammianus 18.5.1); the significance of this fact is discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁶ H. Bell et al., *The Abinnaeus Archive* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 9-11; 34-38 (P. Lond. 447 recto and P. Gen. 45).

the other *protectores*, were led away.... » This indicates clearly that Jacobus and Caesius were *protectores* posted from army headquarters to the fort to serve as *numerarii* there.¹⁷

What of the « other *protectores* » mentioned by Ammianus? Were they also seconded officers? It seems very likely, since normally soldiers rising within an *officium* were given the rank of *protector* or *domesticus* only upon retirement from office.¹⁸ Thus Symmachus asked his friend Richomer, *magister militum*, to help gain the title *protector* for his *domesticus* Firmus; this, he wrote, was a legitimate and customary honor for veterans, « to whom the dignity of *protector* is given as a reward for long service. »¹⁹

However, this promotion to *protector* might be the beginning of a new and more distinguished career, as the example of Antoninus shows. Hence the « other *protectores* » mentioned by Ammianus were probably experienced *officiales* who had been raised to the protectorate and then posted elsewhere to positions of greater responsibility. Symmachus speaks of a *protector* who had been on his staff and then went on to serve as *domesticus* to another high official.²⁰ The chiefs of staff of several border commands (*duces*) received the title *protector* on completing their tours of duty.²¹

It should be noted here that the titles *protector* and

¹⁷ Ammianus 19.9.2: *numerarii apparitionis magistri equitum alique protectores*. The two *numerarii* were the authorized finance officers regularly assigned to the staff (*apparitio*) of the Master of Soldiers in the East. Cf. *Not. Dig.*, Or. 7.62; W. Ensslin, "Numerarius," *PW* 17 (1937), col. 1300.

¹⁸ *C. Th.* 7.1.7 (365); 8.1.13 (382); 10.22.3 (390); 8.1.17 (433); cf. O. Seeck, "Adoratio," *PW* 1 (1894), coll. 400-401. H. Stern, "Remarks on the 'Adoratio' under Diocletian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954), pp. 184-189, reviews more recent literature, sustains Seeck, and in particular stresses that the ceremony was, at least originally, reserved for audiences granted to the highest functionaries.

¹⁹ Symmachus, *Ep.* 3.6.7.

²⁰ Symmachus, *Ep.* 2.74: *commissus domesticis occupationibus*.

²¹ *Not. Dig.*, Or. 39.37; 40.38; 41.41; 42.45.

domesticus tended to be interchangeable, especially by the end of the fourth century. The first laws issued to check the granting of honorary titles specified only the title « honorary protector, » but by 396 the prohibition covered those who gained the title *domesticus* as well.²² On retirement a *primicerius fabricae* was promoted to *protector*, whereas a *numerarius* on retirement became a *domesticus*.²³ In the corps of *notarii* members of the third rank were called indifferently *protector et notarius* and *domesticus et notarius*.²⁴

These facts indicate that the titles *protector* and *domesticus* were used widely as designations of the rank of junior staff officers. Some soldiers gained it after years of service, others while very young. Essentially the rank indicated ability to handle staff assignments, gained either through experience or education. At a time when the army was becoming increasingly barbarized it was no doubt necessary to set apart men fitted for tasks requiring literacy and a knowledge of bureaucratic procedures.

It is against this general background that one may best understand the corps of *domestici* attached to the court. Some men were promoted to it from the ranks, such as that Vitalianus who was raised from *miles* to *domesticus* and eventually made *comes*.²⁵ Others were enrolled in the corps when quite young by right of birth, such as the child who was already enrolled when he died at the age of four years.²⁶ Hence the preamble of an edict on the fees paid by members of the corps: « Since we observe that members of the *schola*

²² *C. Th.* 7.21.1 (320); 7.21.2 (326); 7.21.3 (396): *exprotectoribus aut domesticis*.

²³ *C. Th.* 10.22.3 (390); 8.1.17 (433).

²⁴ *CIL* XI.830 (ca. 415): *protector et notarius*; *C. Th.* 6.10.2 (381) and 3 (381): *domesticus et notarius*. Lenglé, "Tribunus no. 11," *PW* 6A (1937), col. 2453, calls the third rank *protectores et domestici*; Stein (1), p. 112, calls them *protectores domestici*; neither form is documented.

²⁵ Ammianus 25.10.9.

²⁶ *BCH* 62 (1938), p. 476; *AE* 1939, no. 45.

of *protectores domestici* arrive at this position by diverse routes, so also there should be a diversity in the payment of fees. »²⁷ Those admitted « by favor » were required to pay fifty *solidi*, whereas veterans had to pay only five to ten. In general, then, the corps of *protectores domestici* was composed of staff officers selected for duty at court.²⁸ They were assigned a number of missions.

* * *

First, as discussed above, the corps of *domestici* supplied the *scholae* with officers. This went back to institutions of the Tetrarchy; Lactantius carefully distinguishes between enlisted men in the guards (*satellites*) and their officers (*protectores*).²⁹ A similar connection occurs in an astrological work which defined the conjunction of stars governing the career of an imperial guard, « enlisted man or officer » (*scutarius vel protector*).³⁰ Maximinus Daia was promoted from *scutarius* to *protector*, but this was a special case. No other example is known of a *scholaris* promoted to *protector*, and we may suppose that there was a significant barrier between enlisted men and officers, and hence between the two corps. This difference in standing is implied in an edict regarding decurions who left their municipal duties: « some have joined the *domestici* or *protectores*, and some have even joined the *scholae*.... »³¹ Another text showing the difference between officers and enlisted men concerns the Emperor Gallus. Having been publicly insulted by an official of Constantius, the senior Emperor, Gallus ordered his *protec-*

²⁷ C. Th. 6.24.3 (365); cf. Jones (2), p. 638.

²⁸ Gigli, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

²⁹ Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 38.6-7; cf. J. Moreau, *op. cit.*, p. 122, who translates *satellitibus et protectoribus cinctus* with *Entouré de tels satellites et de tels officiers*....

³⁰ Firmicius Maternus, *Peri Mathesos* 3.12.1: *scutarius vel protector*.

³¹ Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 19.6 (Maximinus Daia); C. Th. 12.1.38 (357: decurions).

tores to arrest the man. His command was blocked, however, by Gallus' own quaestor, who pointed out the dangers of such an action to them. Ammianus says the quaestor spoke to the *palatarum primos scholarum*; whether this means all of the *protectores* or only their senior members, it is clear that the *protectores* as a group included the officers and NCO's of the *scholae*.³²

Domestici seconded to the *scholae*, however, and all other *domestici*, remained on the roll of the *schola domesticorum* and under the command of the Count of Domestics (*comes domesticorum*). The Count alone controlled admittance to the corps, and he alone had authority to promote, punish, degrade and expel members.³³

Furthermore, the post of Count of Domestics was often given to ex-tribunes of the *scholae*, and so the ties between Counts of Domestics and officers of the *scholae*—their comrades in arms—must have been very strong.³⁴ And in fact the Count seems to have exercised a *de facto* command over all the palace troops, *scholares* as well as *domestici*. Thus when Julian's troops forced their way into his palace they drove away the guards, tribunes and the Count of Domestics.³⁵

³² Ammianus 14.7.12. The term *primos* here refers to officers below the rank of tribune, as in Ammianus 19.6.3: *tribunis primisque ordines*; cf. Grosse, p. 112.

³³ *C. Th.* 6.24.2 (365) and 3 (365) concerning admittance; *C. J.* 12.17.3 (ca. 450) concerning degradation and promotion; *C. Th.* 6.24.5 (392) and 16.5.42 (408) concerning expulsion. The last law, ordering the expulsion of heretics, is addressed to both the Master of Offices and Count of Domestics, showing the division of authority over palace troops. Cf. O. Seeck, "Comites no. 25," *PW* 4 (1900), col. 650; Grosse, pp. 139-140.

³⁴ O. Seeck, *ibid.*, col. 649, says that "normally the office of Count of Domestics was held by former tribunes of the *scholae*." This seems entirely plausible, but actually only two cases can be documented: Mallobaudes (Ammianus 14.11.21 and 31.10.6) and Boniface (scattered references collated by O. Seeck, "Bonifatius no. 1," *PW* 3 [1897], coll. 698-699, and interpreted by W. Ensslin, *Klio* 36 [1944], p. 261). Another post leading to Count of Domestics was *tribunus stabili*; examples include Stilicho (*CIL* VI.1761) and Aerobindus (*CIL* XIII.10032 no. 3).

³⁵ Ammianus 20.4.21.

When Alaric established Attalus as puppet emperor the two key posts he reserved were Field Marshal (*magister utriusque militiae*), which he took for himself, and Count of Domestics, which he gave to his brother-in-law and heir, Athaulf.³⁶ And when Valentinian III had assassinated Aetius and was faced with the problem of controlling the palace troops, he summoned Majorian to his aid as Count of Domestics, commander of the *turmae palatinae*.³⁷ In all these situations there is no mention of the nominal commander of the *scholares*, the Master of the Offices. That post was in fact essentially civilian in nature, and was generally occupied by bureaucrats from the corps of state secretaries (*notarii*) or the staffs of the finance ministers. After service as Master the next post was one of the prefectures, both distinctly civilian offices.³⁸ Under these circumstances it seems natural that the Count of Domestics, as a general and chief of staff to the emperor, took effective command of all the palace troops, the *scholae* headed by the Master of the Offices as well as his own *schola domesticorum*.

As chief of staff the Count of Domestics was sometimes dispatched on special missions in emergencies, as when Valentinian I sent Count Severus to Britain to check an invasion of Picts and Scots, or when Gratian sent Richomer to Valens with help against the Goths, and later dispatched his successor Nannienus to drive back the invading Alamanni.³⁹ Normally, however, the Counts served at the emperor's side, and in this capacity seem to have had authority to issue orders on occasion in the emperor's name. Thus Stilicho in the campaign against the usurper Maximus, while still only

³⁶ Sozomen, *HE* 9.8.

³⁷ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Paneg.* 5.305-308; cf. Stein (1), pp. 348-349.

³⁸ Boak, pp. 106-108.

³⁹ Ammianus 27.8.1-2 (Severus); 31.7.4 (Richomer); 31.10.6 (Nannienus).

Count of Domestics, issued orders to the marshals « even though he was their inferior in age and authority. »⁴⁰ In all these spheres of activity the Count was aided by the members of his corps on duty at court. It is impossible, however, to say anything more specific about their duties.

* * *

Not all *domestici*, however, were on duty at court. As Mommsen noted, the duty of actually guarding the emperor was discharged by the *scholares*, and hence members of the corps of *domestici* were free for other functions.⁴¹ Apart from those assigned to the *scholae*, the *domestici* constituted a pool of officers who could be drawn upon for adjutants and commanders as the need arose.

Thus in 365 when Ursicinus was sent to Germany to remove the usurper Silvanus, he took along ten tribunes and *protectores domestici* « to serve as his staff and aid him in his official duties. »⁴² These assignments were made by the Count of Domestics; Ammianus tells us he was attached to Ursicinus' staff by imperial order (*imperiale praeceptum*),⁴³ and the Count would have been the officer involved as commander of the *domestici* and the emperor's chief of staff.

Later when Ursicinus was sent to the East to take command there he kept on his staff only Ammianus and the other younger men; the other *domestici* were given commands in the field.⁴⁴ This was by no means unusual, for we know of a number of *domestici* who were sent out as commanders. Two began as enlisted men in regiments of the field

⁴⁰ Claudian, *Laus Serenae* (30), 11.196-201; cf. O. Seeck, "Stilicho," *PW* 3A (1929), col. 2523.

⁴¹ Mommsen, *GS* 8, p. 440.

⁴² Ammianus 15.5.22.

⁴³ Ammianus 14.9.1.

⁴⁴ Ammianus 16.10.21.

army (*palatini*), were promoted to the corps of *domestici* and eventually made the rank of *comes*.⁴⁵ Aelian, the commander of Amida in 359 with the rank of *comes*, had been a *protector domesticus* at the siege of Singara in 344. He was serving on the staff of Constantius II, who was present at the siege, and had distinguished himself by leading two infantry regiments in a successful sally against the Persians, and as a reward received the command of these units.⁴⁶

Other *domestici* were dispatched on special missions. Thus in 365 Valentinian sent three men to organize the defense of Africa against the rebel Procopius; these included a *notarius*, a *protector domesticus*, and a *scutarius*.⁴⁷ Ammianus, when little more than twenty years of age—and therefore very soon after his entry into the corps of *domestici*—was attached to the staff of Ursicinus and accompanied him to his various commands during the next six years.⁴⁸

Domestici such as these who were away on assignment were called *deputati*, and they formed a large and recognized part of the corps. An edict of 392 defines detached duty as the alternative type of service: *domestici* were to be expelled if they had « neither performed service at Our court nor executed missions as *deputati*. »⁴⁹ *Deputati* were in fact entered as a separate section in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, and elsewhere they are contrasted with those *domestici* on duty at court (*domestici praesentales*).⁵⁰

Deputati were dispatched on a wide variety of assignments. An edict regarding pay warrants mentions *domestici* « who have been commissioned to protect any districts or

⁴⁵ Ammianus 20.4.18 (Maurus); 25.10.9 (Vitalianus).

⁴⁶ Ammianus 18.9.3; cf. Stein (1), p. 138.

⁴⁷ Ammianus 26.5.24.

⁴⁸ Ammianus 14.9.1; 16.10.21. Cf. Thompson, pp. 1-10.

⁴⁹ C. Th. 6.24.5 (392).

⁵⁰ Not. Dig., Or. 15.8, Occ. 13.8; C. Th. 6.24.1 (362); C. J. 2.7.24 no. 3 (519); C. J. 12.17.4 (6th century); cf. Grosse, p. 141.

have been assigned to some rather distant service or have been placed under the orders of Our governors; » these *deputati* received orders valid for up to one year, but renewable.⁵¹ When traveling on orders *deputati* were granted official post warrants and were allowed two posthorses.⁵² *Deputati* had a good deal of authority while on a mission, and because of the opportunities this gave them for extortion and graft they were strictly forbidden to accept missions to their native provinces.⁵³

* * *

What were the functions of *deputati*? Some, like Ammianus, remained on the personal staff of the marshal to whom they had been assigned. As such they might participate in command conferences, as did Ammianus at Amida.⁵⁴ He was also sent on various special missions by Ursicinus. They varied greatly in nature, ranging from bringing a little boy home to reporting on Persian concentrations in Corduene.⁵⁵

Others were sent out to subordinate commands. Thus in 366 the usurper Procopius sent a *protector domesticus*, Marcellus, to Bithynia with an expeditionary force and then sent him to Nicaea as garrison commander.⁵⁶ But these were extraordinary commands in revolutionary times; normally a *domesticus* would be assigned to a subordinate commander's headquarters as a staff officer. By the end of the fourth century army commanders in the field received their chiefs of staff

⁵¹ C. Th. 7.4.27 (406).

⁵² C. Th. 8.5.49 (389).

⁵³ C. Th. 8.8.4 (386).

⁵⁴ Ammianus 19.6.5 and 19.7.6; cf. Thompson, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ammianus 18.6.10; 18.6.20.

⁵⁶ Zosimus 4.6; Ammianus 26.10.1. Although Ammianus calls Marcellus simply *protector* he must have had the higher rank of *protector domesticus* to have received such important assignments, and later he claimed the imperial crown itself. Cf. W. Ensslin, "Marcellus no. 16," *PW* 14 (1930), col. 1492.

and finance officers from the marshals at court.⁵⁷ For example, the Marshal for Gaul received his chief of staff (*princeps*) « from the staffs of the Marshals of Troops, one year from the Marshal of Infantry, the next year from the Marshal of Cavalry. »⁵⁸ In this way the central government maintained control over commanders in the field by having trusted agents at their side. Similar measures were taken to control civilian officials by assigning them members of the secret service (*agentes in rebus*) as their chiefs of staff.⁵⁹

It is worth noting here that during the fifth century this system was altered in the East, where *agentes* were assigned to military leaders as well as civilian officials as their chiefs of staff.⁶⁰ *Agentes*, however, were essentially civilian officials. They were certainly not fitted by training or status for the position of adjutant to a general or field-grade officer. This role was filled by the officer's *domesticus*. Cassiodorus, who faithfully copied the imperial usages of his day whenever possible, specifically says that in his day the titles of *primicerius* and *domesticus* were equivalent; since he is referring to an appointment made by virtue of the Ostrogothic king's position as an imperial marshal, it is clear that the *domesticus* had taken the place of the *princeps* as adjutant to a

⁵⁷ *C. Th.* 1.7.3 (398). This applies the practice to the staff of the Count of Africa, "just as to the counts and dukes of the different provinces and frontiers." Cf. *Not. Dig.*, Occ. 7.114; Grosse, p. 129. Probably this developed late in the fourth century, perhaps under Stilicho, but there is no clear evidence on the matter.

⁵⁸ *Not. Dig.*, Occ. 7.112. Cf. Occ. 25.38, 41, 42 (*Comes Africae*, who received not only his *princeps* but also his *commentarienses* and *numerarii* from the Marshals); Occ. 31.33 (*Dux Tripolitanae*), etc.

⁵⁹ Cf. W. G. Sinnigen, "Two Branches of the Late Roman Secret Service," *AJP* 80 (1959), pp. 238-254.

⁶⁰ *Not. Dig.*, Or. 28.48; cf. Nesselhauf, *op. cit.*, p. 43, which indicates that the Western practice was the original, as opposed to the implication of Grosse, p. 123.

Marshal.⁶¹ And it is probable, although unprovable, that the *domestici* of the fifth and sixth centuries were drawn from the corps of *protectores domestici*, and that this had its origin in fourth-century practices.

One indication of this is the early evidence for military *domestici*. In 355 the *domesticus* of Silvanus, Marshal in Gaul, was tried and executed along with four generals (*comites*); it is clear that he was an officer of high rank.⁶² Now as noted above the commander in Gaul, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the early fifth century, received his chief of staff (*princeps*) from the Marshals at court. Certainly the *domesticus*, Silvanus' most important subordinate—we never hear anything of Silvanus' *princeps*—would also have been seconded. Or, what is more likely, Silvanus' *domesticus* was his chief of staff, and hence the titles *princeps* (or *primicerius*) and *domesticus* were already equivalent.

We also hear twice of a group of *domestici* attached to the service of a general. In 371 Valentinian sent the elder Theodosius to restore order in Africa, and one of Theodosius' first acts was to place under arrest the Count of Africa and his *domestici*.⁶³ Now the Count of Africa received his chief of staff and his legal and finance officers from the Marshals at court.⁶⁴ It seems very reasonable to suppose that these *protectores domestici* assigned to duty on the staff of a Count were regarded collectively as his *domestici*, his chief subordinates and advisers.

This deduction is supported by the practices followed

⁶¹ Cassidorus, *Var.* 10.11; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 448–449; Stein (2), pp. 117–118, especially p. 117, n. 2, reviews recent literature and sustains Mommsen. Stein (2), pp. 320–321, describes Belisarius' *domesticus* as his chief of staff, and notes that after Belisarius' departure from Africa he acted as Marshal of Troops in Africa.

⁶² Ammianus 15.6.1–4.

⁶³ Ammianus 29.5.7.

⁶⁴ *Not. Dig.*, *Occ.* 25.38, 41, 42.

under the Ostrogothic Kingdom, which were closely modelled on the institutions current at the time in the Eastern Empire. Theoretically the king of the Ostrogoths ruled as a subordinate of the Roman emperor, who had conferred on him the office of Marshal (*magister militum praesentalis*).⁶⁵ As such the king was attended by a select body of guards, the *domestici et protectores*.⁶⁶ These were under the direct command of the king; though the post of Count of Domestics existed it was purely honorary (*vacans*),⁶⁷ so that the king's *protectores domestici* had essentially the status of imperial *domestici* seconded to a *magister militum*. Other passages in Cassiodorus indicate that some of these *domestici* were assigned to generals in the provinces (*comites*) to serve on their staffs, and in this position enjoyed very high pay and exercised authority sufficient to enable them to extort large sums from the provincials.⁶⁸

If this gives us a clue to earlier imperial practices, and there is every reason to think it does, then we may conclude that during the fourth century the practice arose of assigning *protectores* from the Marshals' staffs—themselves seconded from the imperial *protectores domestici*—to the various army headquarters throughout the provinces. There they served as adjutants and advisers to their commanders, and as such served as their *domestici*. No real confusion was occasioned by such nomenclature—that is, they were not confused with the elite group serving in the imperial palace,

⁶⁵ Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 406–407. Jones (1), p. 247, shows that Theodoric also used the title *rex*, and describes the transition more carefully in these words: “Roman officials styled *comitiaci*... were *appraesentalis*, whose functions had been absorbed by the crown” (*ibid.*, pp. 254–255).

⁶⁶ Cassiodorus, *Var.* 1.10 and 11.31; Procopius, *HA* 26.28.

⁶⁷ Cassiodorus, *Var.* 6.11; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 403–404.

⁶⁸ Cassiodorus, *Var.* 5.14 and 9.13; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 438–439.

although these, too, were called *domestici*—because always the rank of a *domesticus* depended on that of his superior.⁶⁹

* * *

The corps of *domestici*, then, was used by the imperial government to staff and control the various army headquarters in the provinces. It was one of the several agencies used by authorities in the capital to maintain control over the great bureaucracy; « imperial commissioners of almost every kind could be sent out to look after the interests of the central government and to act as spies and informers. »⁷⁰ As such they fulfilled functions in the military sphere similar to those in the civilian sphere which were assigned to the *agentes in rebus* and the *tribuni et notarii*.

And, in fact, the corps of *domestici* is named in conjunction with these other agencies. An edict of 382 frees *notarii*, *scholares*, *domestici* and *palatini* (used here to refer to finance officials) from certain compulsory public duties.⁷¹ Another edict which forbids the dispatch of officials to their native provinces refers specifically to *domestici*, *protectores*, *stratores* (imperial stablemasters), *agentes in rebus* and *palatini*.⁷² An even more significant edict in this connection concerns the provision of posthorses by provincial governors to imperial officials dispatched on special missions; the corps mentioned are the *domestici*, *protectores* and *agentes in rebus*.⁷³ Most significant of all, however, is an edict of 406 which granted tax exemptions to *protectores* and

⁶⁹ Grosse, pp. 120-121.

⁷⁰ W. Sinnigen, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

⁷¹ C. Th. 11.16.15 (382).

⁷² C. Th. 8.8.4 (386).

⁷³ C. Th. 8.8.49 (389); cf. Jones (2), pp. 830-834, on the *cursus publicus*.

domestici who had been dispatched on special missions or assigned to the staffs of officials:

None of the imperial bodyguard (*protectores*) or household guard (*domestici*) who have been commissioned to protect any districts or who have been assigned to some rather distant service, or who are under the orders of Our judges and who are obedient to their commands shall receive their subsistence allowances or any emoluments unless, at the completion of one consular year, they shall take care to renew their letters of instructions (*commonitoria*) for the next consular year.⁷⁴

These edicts indicate quite clearly that *protectores* and *domestici* were used by the central government as agents of control, more or less in the same way that *agentes in rebus* were used to inspect and report on provincial authorities. It would seem logical to suppose that just as *agentes in rebus* were assigned to the staffs (*officia*) of civil officials, so *domestici* and *protectores* were assigned to military *officia*. Unfortunately, however, there is little explicit evidence on the assignments of *domestici* and *protectores* to military *officia*, and most of it concerns the Eastern Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. This evidence is not conclusive for the fourth century, and indeed it is entirely possible that the posting of imperial agents to military *officia* only became general after 395 or even 460, as part of a general reaction against barbarian and military domination. For these reasons the question must remain open.

⁷⁴ C. Th. 7.4.27 (406): *nullus protectorum vel domesticorum, cui aut tuitio locorum aut quaedam longior est commissa necessitas aut certe iudicium nostrorum praeceptis iussus obtemperat...*; tr. Pharr. *op. cit.*, p. 162.

Chapter VI

DUTIES

As members of the emperor's staff the *scholares* were assigned a variety of functions. Their primary mission was of course to attend the emperor at all times, but they were also used in his service for military, police and administrative purposes. They played an important role in the great imperial ceremonies, and because of their close relation to the sovereign they were used to support his religion. A discussion of each of these aspects follows.

* * *

At least a few *scholares* were always in attendance on the emperor. When Valens met a Gothic chieftain on a boat in the middle of the Danube he was accompanied by a guard.¹ On another occasion, when he lay down to sleep in a wood while campaigning, a guard was able to approach him and attack him.² Once, when Valentinian II was conferring with Arbogastes, he lost his temper and drew his sword, and was only prevented from attacking Arbogastes by the intervention of a guard; evidently *scholares* were present even when the emperor conferred with his most important ministers.³ At night guards stood duty outside the emperor's bedroom.⁴ One of the ways by which Constantine showed

¹ Ammianus 27.5.9.

² Ammianus 29.1.16.

³ Philostorgius, *HE* 11.1.

⁴ Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 30.

his extraordinary respect for the prelates at Nicaea was to enter the council chamber without « the soldiers or guards who usually accompanied him » and surrounded only by « friends in the faith. »⁵ Guards were also assigned to escort empresses and Caesars.⁶

Attendance on the emperor often meant following him into the thick of battle. « War is the craft of an emperor, and he must learn it by serving with his troops. »⁷ This precept was advanced by Synesius in his « Discourse on Kingship, » and, although in his day it represented exhortation rather than fact, it was certainly true during the fourth century when emperors were first and foremost warriors. At the ceremony in which Constantius II raised Julian to the throne his final charge was as follows: « When it is necessary to meet the enemy in battle take your place with the standard-bearers at the head of your men. »⁸ Julian was indeed a fighting general and could proudly claim that he had shared in all the labors and dangers endured by his « fellow soldiers » (*commilitones*).⁹ When setting out on his Persian campaign Julian told his soldiers, « I shall be with you at all times, as emperor, as leader and as cavalryman. »¹⁰ In saying this Julian was typical of the martial traditions of the fourth century. Emperors were expected to lead and encourage their troops, and they were surrounded by a battle-hardened

⁵ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 3.10; cf. 1.44. Theodoret, *HE* 1.7, cautiously says that Constantine entered with a few followers.

⁶ Julian, *Ad Ath.* 285B (Eusebia); Theodoret, *HE* 5.19 (Flacilla); Ammianus 14.7.9 (Gallus); Ammianus 20.4.21 (Julian).

⁷ Synesius, *De regno* 14 (1076C).

⁸ Ammianus 15.8.13.

⁹ Ammianus 20.5.4; 21.5.2. Synesius, *De regno* 13 (1073A), praises the emperor who has earned the right to address his soldiers as comrades, “for are they not in a certain degree his friends?” Theodosius the Elder, while commanding in Africa, addressed his troops as “tentmates” (*contubernales*): Ammianus 29.5.22.

¹⁰ Ammianus 23.5.19.

military nobility, « trained from the cradle to endure hardships. »¹¹

Under these circumstances, guarding the emperor was a difficult task. The *scholae* had to be more than an escort; they formed a crack troop of picked men. And there were many occasions when their valor was tested. Perhaps the most dramatic instance occurred in 359, when Constantius confronted an army of Limigantes at the frontier. Thinking to win them over to an alliance, the Emperor agreed to address the assembled barbarians. Then, when he was speaking from a tribunal, the barbarians surged forward to kill him, and Constantius was only able to escape because his guards held back the barbarians, fighting to the last man.¹² At the battle of Adrianople the Emperor Valens withdrew to a cottage with an escort of guards. The cottage was burned down and all but one of the guards perished with the Emperor.¹³

Other incidents indicate clearly that when emperors were on the battlefield they were attended by *scholares*. Once during the Persian campaign Julian went too close to the walls of Ctesiphon and was recognized; a rain of missiles followed, one of them hitting a *scutarius* at the Emperor's side, and Julian only escaped due to the protection of his guards' shields held in close array.¹⁴ On the same campaign Julian personally engaged in battle with the Persians and was wounded by a Saracen cavalryman; a *protector* immediately attacked the Saracen and beheaded him.¹⁵ Just before the

¹¹ Ammianus 27.6.8. A. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (London, 1948), p. 225, points out that the high command as established by Constantine required that the emperor exercise supreme command to coordinate the separate arms. When the emperors ceased to take the field after 395, changes had to be made.

¹² Ammianus 19.11.8-12.

¹³ Ammianus 31.13.14-15.

¹⁴ Ammianus 24.5.6.

¹⁵ Philostorgius, *HE* 7.15. The word used here is δορυφόρος, which usually means *protector*, as opposed to ὑπασπιστής (*scutarius*).

battle of Solicinium Valentinian dismissed most of his guards and went forward with a picked detachment to reconnoitre the approaches to a hilltop.¹⁶ Then in the battle the Roman charge was led by two *scholares*, a *scutarius* and a *gentilis*, and among those who fell fighting were the senior officer of the *domestici* and a brave *scutarius*.¹⁷

The *scholae*, in fact, formed an important part of the Empire's mobile field force. We are specifically told, for instance, that the Alamanni were encouraged to attack Julian at Sens because they had learned that he had sent away his *scutarii* and *gentiles*.¹⁸ This had been done to facilitate provisioning, but on occasion *scholares* were dispatched as an expeditionary force. Thus, when the Goths invaded Thrace in 377 they found their way blocked by a force of *scutarii* and other units under the command of the tribune of the *scutarii*.¹⁹ Valens sent his Count of Domestics to Cyzicus to guard the imperial treasury against the rebel Procopius, and on another occasion he sent the Count with 1,000 men to catch and imprison the King of Armenia before he and his escort left the Empire.²⁰

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Scholares were assigned police duties as well. When the emperor felt that his security was threatened he could proceed independently, since his staff was a little government in itself. The soldiers attached to his service were indispensable as instruments of control. We see this most clearly in the Gallus episode.

¹⁶ Ammianus 27.10.10-11.

¹⁷ Ammianus 27.10.12, 16. Similarly at the battle of Lake Constance in 355 the Roman charge was led by the *scutarii*: Ammianus 15.4.9.

¹⁸ Ammianus 16.4.1.

¹⁹ Ammianus 31.8.9.

²⁰ Ammianus 26.8.7 (Cyzicus) and 30.1.11 (King of Armenia).

Once Constantius had decided to remove his junior colleague he acted entirely through his staff. First Gallus was persuaded to come to Milan through Scudilo, tribune of the *scutarii*. While on the trip he was taken into custody by two officers of the guards, the Count of Domestics and a tribune. Then Gallus was formally arrested by his own Count of Domestics (assigned to him by Constantius) with a detachment of soldiers « whom the emperor had picked out as men bound to him by special ties. » He was interrogated by Constantius' grand chamberlain, a state secretary (*notarius*) and a tribune of the guard, and, his answers proving unsatisfactory, Constantius ordered that he be executed by a commission of three court officials, a *notarius*, a secret service agent (*agens in rebus*), and a *domesticus*.²¹

Guards were regularly used for arrests and executions carried out on the authority of the emperor, again a function of what we would call political police. The Emperor Gallus, for example, having been enraged by the insolence of an official, ordered his *protectores* (that is, *protectores domestici*) to arrest the man, and soon after he sent *protectores* to arrest the official's son-in-law, who was captured in Armenia while fleeing to Constantinople.²²

How the various imperial services worked together is illustrated by the case of Africanus, governor of Pannonia Secunda. At a party given by Africanus several of his guests

²¹ Ammianus 14.11. Serenianus, the third member of the execution commission, is not identified as to position by Ammianus. He had until recently been commander in Phoenicia, then had been saved from criminal charges by Valens, added to the imperial staff, and later promoted to be Count of Domestics. Hence it seems reasonable to call him a *domesticus*. He was probably a tribune of a *schola* or a *tribunus vacans*; cf. O. Seeck, "Serenianus no. 2," *PIW* 2A (1923), col. 1674. From Ammianus' account and from Socrates, *HE* 2.34, it is evident that Gallus had forebodings of his fate and left reluctantly, another indication of the power exercised by the emperor's agents; cf. R. Mooney, "Gallus Caesar's Last Journey," *Classical Philology* 53 (1958), pp. 175-177.

²² Ammianus 14.7.12, 19.

freely criticized the government and indicated that they looked forward to a change of rulers. A member of the secret service (*agentes in rebus*) was present and he reported this seditious conversation to Rufinus, a colleague in the secret service who had been assigned to the praetorian prefecture as chief of staff (*princeps officii ex agente in rebus*). Rufinus immediately informed the emperor, who then dispatched two *protectores domestici* to Sirmium to arrest Africanus and all the other « partakers of his fatal banquet. » No doubt they were aided in executing this commission by a detachment of *scholares*. This whole affair indicates the manner in which the several branches of the emperor's *officium* cooperated efficiently to maintain the imperial authority.²³

Discipline was strict. One of the men arrested with Africanus succeeded in committing suicide before he could be tried. As a result the two *domestici* were found guilty of negligence and sentenced to banishment. Valentinian had several *domestici* clubbed to death for an offense under similar circumstances.²⁴

Scholares were used especially often for two particular types of police duty: to maintain order in the capital, and to enforce imperial ecclesiastical policies. These disparate spheres shared one characteristic: they were not entrusted to any minister and only the emperor himself could intervene effectively.

Normally order in the capitals was maintained by the urban prefects, but they had not sufficient armed force to crush any serious riot or insurrection. During the Early Empire the prefect of Rome had at his disposal the urban cohorts, but these had declined as an effective force by the reign of Constantine and were disbanded sometime in the

²³ Ammianus 15.3.7-11; cf. W. G. Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture during the Later Roman Empire* (Rome, 1957), pp. 28-30.

²⁴ Ammianus 15.3.11 (Constantius); 29.3.8 (Valentinian).

fourth century. One of the basic principles of the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine was separation of the military and civil powers, and it was to be expected that, as a general rule, the civil governors of the capitals should cease to command military forces. The prefects had at their direct disposal only certain armed personnel attached to their *officia*.²⁵

These armed *officiales* were of low status, being classed as *illiterati*, the lowest rank of *officiales*. They do not seem to have been organized in regular military formations, and are referred to variously as « heralds » (*nomenclatores*), « officials » (*apparitores*), « followers » (*obsequentes*), or « tentmates » (*contubernales*). They cannot have been much more than policemen.²⁶ Such forces often proved inadequate to cope with the many serious insurrections and riots which occurred in the capitals. In Rome, for example, a prefect on one occasion only saved himself by appearing before the mob with his two infants and begging for pity; in 409 the prefect Pompeianus was actually stoned to death, and ten years later the prefect and vicar narrowly escaped a similar fate.²⁷

Such a precarious situation did not, of course, recommend

²⁵ M. Durry, *Les cohortes prétoriennes* (Paris, 1938), pp. 14-16; Sinnigen, *The Officium...*, pp. 88-100. A. Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1960), pp. 254-272, argues that the urban cohorts continued in existence until sometime during the reign of Valentinian I and were then incorporated into the urban prefect's *officium*. This, however, would have meant that his *officium* numbered 5,000 in the later fourth century, an improbably high number. It is more reasonable to suppose that the urban cohorts declined in numbers and effectiveness, which is supported by Chastagnol's own emphasis on how the prefects relied on the *curatores regionum* and *corporati* to maintain order; cf. rev. of Chastagnol by Wm. Sinnigen, *AJP* 83 (1962), pp. 301-304, esp. p. 302.

²⁶ *Not. Dig.*, Occ. 4.32, and Symmachus, *Relationes* 23.8 (*nomenclatores*); Ammianus 15.7.2 and *Avell. Coll.*, *epist.* 16.5 (*apparitores*); Ammianus 15.7.3 (*obsequentes*); *Avell. Coll.*, *epist.* 16.5 (*contubernales*); cf. Chastagnol, *op. cit.*, 242-243, and Sinnigen, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

²⁷ Chastagnol, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270, with references.

itself to the authorities responsible for the safety of the emperor and his court. In Constantinople and Milan troops were placed at the disposal of the urban prefect and on several recorded occasions played a crucial role. Those troops were called *urbaniciani* and are first mentioned in an edict of 396. This gives certain officials in the palace the right of nominating candidates for promotion within the secret service. The officials so privileged were senior members of the secret service, the senior chamberlains, counts of the second rank and tribunes of the *urbaniciani*. Since these tribunes clearly figured among the chief officials of the palace, and since the *urbaniciani* are not mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, compiled not long after the edict was issued, these soldiers may be identified with *scholares*. *Urbaniciani* had been used as a name for the old corps of urban cohorts, and evidently it was applied sometime in the fourth century for a special detachment of *scholares*.²⁸ As we shall see below several other detachments of *scholares* were set apart for special missions, another consideration which supports this identification.

It is clear, moreover, that without the *scholares* the Eastern capital was without any garrison. Thus in 378 when Valens was about to march against the Goths with all his troops—including, no doubt, all his guards—the people clamored in the Hippodrome to be given arms, and this was actually done after Adrianople. Then in the Gainas crisis of 400 the government, unable to depend on the barbarian *scholares*, again armed the populace.²⁹

One well documented use of *scholares* for police duty occurred in 385 in Milan, then the capital of Valentinian II.

²⁸ C. Th. 6.27.8 (396); Sinnigen, *The Officium...*, pp. 89-90.

²⁹ Socrates, *HE* 4.38, 5.1 (Adrianople) and 6.6 (Gainas); cf. G. Manojlovic, "Le peuple de Constantinople," *Byzantion* 11 (1936), pp. 617-716, esp. pp. 632-634. More recent literature is reviewed briefly by G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1957), pp. 61-62.

The Emperor's mother, Justina, was a convinced Arian and determined that a church in Milan should be set aside for Arian worship. Ambrose, bishop of Milan at the time, was summoned to the palace to appear before the imperial cabinet (*consistorium*), and was ordered to hand over a church for use by the Arians. He refused, and during the ensuing discussion a threatening mob collected outside the palace. At this point troops were needed to maintain order, and a company of soldiers under a military count was posted outside the palace.³⁰ The only military counts in the palatine services were tribunes of the *scholae* who had been honored with that rank. By the end of the fourth century this special promotion had become quite regular.³¹

Scholares were used a second time in this conflict. A month after Ambrose's refusal Justina sent troops to take possession of the Portian Basilica, a church outside Milan which the Empress was determined to have for the use of her Arian courtiers and guards. The soldiers sent were *decani*.³² They were soldiers subject to the Master of Offices, and some were evidently assigned to the emperor personally rather than the palace, since a special group was attached to the service of the empress.³³ John Chrysostom, in comparing the heavenly

³⁰ Ambrose, *Sermo contra Auxentium* 29 (Migne, *PL* 16, col. 1059). For a full account of the whole conflict between Ambrose and Justina see F. H. Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* (2 vols., Oxford, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 270-280.

³¹ *C. Th.* 6.13 (413); cf. Grosse, p. 146.

³² Ambrose, *Ep.* 20.4 (Migne, *PL* 16, col. 1037); cf. O. Seeck, "Decani no. 2," *PW* 4 (1901), col. 2246, and R. Guiland, "Le decanos et le referendaire," *Revue des études Byzantines* 5 (1947), pp. 90-100.

³³ *C. Th.* 6.33 (416) and *C. J.* 12.26.2 (443) indicate that the *decani* were subject to the Master of Offices in both administrative and judicial matters. The second edict concerns *scholares* as well, a significant association; cf. Boak, p. 39. The surmise of Guiland, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93, that the *decani* were subject to the *praepositus* or *castrensis sacri palatii* is based entirely on conjectures of Böcking; it was observed long ago that this cannot be sustained and that "it seems certain that they [*decani*] served under the Master of the Offices": J. E. Dunlap, *The*

and palatine hierarchies, indicates clearly that *decani* occupied the lowest rank among the military palatine services.³⁴ Normally their duty was to stand guard at the portals of the imperial apartments and the gates of the palace, and they also served as ushers,³⁵ but they were sometimes sent on important missions as in this instance and as on another occasion early in the fifth century when a « mounted *decanus* from the palace » was dispatched to protect a community of monks from the bishop of Chalcedon.³⁶

All of this indicates that the *decani* were the actual guards at the palace. Yet they are not mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The explanation is probably that they, like the *urbani-ciani*, were not an independent corps but rather a detachment of the *scholares*. This is supported by the group's organization. *Decani* were entered on their own *matricula* and were headed by their four most senior men, who had the title *primicerius*, but they are referred to collectively only by the vague term *corpus*, and having four officers with the title *primicerius* is not the normal official usage.³⁷ What we seem to have here is another group of *scholares* loosely detached from the main body and simply divided into four sections for duty assignments, each under its own senior member.

The use of *decani* was followed by the dispatch of more troops in the conflict between Ambrose and Justina. Popular

Office of the Grand Chamberlain (Ann Arbor, 1924), pp. 214-215. C. J. 12.59. 10, 5 (ca. 470) mentions *decani* assigned to the empress.

³⁴ Joh. Chrys., *In epist. ad Hebraeos* 7.13.5 (Migne, PG 63, coll. 108-109); cf. Guillard, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

³⁵ Marcus Diaconus, *Vita S. Porphyrii* 39-40; cf. *Vie de Porphyre*, ed. H. Gregoire and M. Kugener (Paris, 1930), pp. 114-115.

³⁶ Callinicus, *De vita S. Hypatii*, ed. G. Karo et al. (Leipzig, 1895), p. 83.

³⁷ C. Th. 6.33 (416); cf. W. Ensslin, "Primicerius," *PW* supp. no. 8, col. 614: "He whose name was first on the official roll (*matricula*), therefore the senior or chief of an *officium*..."

opposition to the imperial seizure of the Basilica Portiana was so great that after a few days a large body of armed soldiers was sent to guard the church, and these soldiers were unquestionably *scholares*. They were German troops and were commanded by counts and tribunes; that is, tribunes of the *scholae*, some of whom had been promoted to the rank of count. The tribunes, though not the counts, seem to have been Germans too, for Ambrose tells of turning to Gothic tribunes and reproaching them for their part in creating the conflict; he held them especially culpable because they were from outside the Empire.³⁸

Eventually Justina was forced to give way on the church, partly because of Ambrose's adamant resistance and partly because of the strong support Ambrose received from the strongly Catholic people of Milan. The incident shows the role of the *scholae* in enforcing imperial orders. On this occasion, however, the emperor had avoided a direct clash with the people. Some years later, in 401, a conflict arose in Constantinople, and this was resolved by more brutal methods which illustrate the full potential of the *scholae* as repressive instruments.

This conflict involved John Chrysostom, who was then at the height of his fame and influence. He had come to Constantinople three years before as patriarch and had immediately set about using his great oratorical powers to denounce the social inequalities of the city and the luxurious and immoral life of the richer classes. This gained him enthusiastic support among the masses. Then, perhaps made overconfident by this support, Chrysostom asserted his independence of the government and even dared to criticize the Empress. He also aroused hostility within the church

³⁸ Ambrose, *Ep.* 20.8-10; cf. Rufinus, *HE* 2.15 (Migne, *PL* 21, coll. 523-524): [Valentinian II] *armatorum globum ad ecclesiam mittit*.

by taking severe and even arbitrary measures against prelates whom he judged unworthy.

Eventually Chrysostom's enemies at court and within the hierarchy joined forces, a packed synod was held near Chalcedon, and the patriarch was condemned and deposed. Chrysostom refused to recognize the authority of the synod, but the Emperor had him arrested by a count with a military detachment « armed as if for battle against the barbarians. »³⁹ Here again we may be sure that this military count in the capital was commander of a *schola*. Evidently the court was apprehensive of popular resistance and had Chrysostom conducted to exile by a strong military escort.

The apprehensions of the court proved to be well-grounded. Rioting broke out in protest against the patriarch's exile, and eventually the Emperor had to give way. Chrysostom was brought back, installed in his cathedral with great rejoicing, and was favored with every mark of imperial esteem. But within a few years the patriarch and court were again at loggerheads. Again a packed synod was held, again Chrysostom was deposed, and again the people rallied to his support. The conflict came to a head on Easter Eve.

It was the custom to have a great mass baptism ceremony on the night before Easter. Chrysostom, having been denied the use of his cathedral by an imperial order, decided to hold the ceremony in the Baths of Constantine. A large congregation collected, including three thousand candidates. Meanwhile, however, two leading bishops of the anti-Chrysostom faction had brought the matter before Anthemius, Master of

³⁹ Palladius, *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* 9 (Migne, PG 47, col. 30). The following details regarding the struggle between Chrysostom and the court are drawn mainly from chapters 9 and 10 of this work (Migne, PG 47, coll. 30-35); cf. Seeck (5), pp. 335-370, 574-584; Bury (1), pp. 138-160; C. Balducci, "Il dissidio fra S. Giovanni Crisostomo ed Eudossia," *Atti del IV Congresso Nazionale di Studi Romani* (Rome, 1938), vol. 1, pp. 303-310.

the Offices. The patriarch, they said, was undermining the Emperor's authority. The churches were deserted and all the faithful were supporting Chrysostom. They asked Anthemius to break up the meeting in the Baths. Anthemius agreed, acting evidently on his own authority.⁴⁰ Presumably this was covered by general instructions from the Emperor.

At first Anthemius tried to avoid force. He sent Lucius, tribune of a *schola* of *gentiles*, to order the people out. Lucius was ignored. Anthemius therefore ordered him to clear the Baths, and this he did by attacking the people with his soldiers. Many of the catechumens were wounded and all were forcibly driven out, some still unclothed as they had been awaiting baptism. The deacons and presbyters were beaten and imprisoned, and blood stained the baptismal waters. It was a savage act of repression, and is so described in a letter of remonstrance sent by Honorius which speaks of it as a « bloody crime. »⁴¹

On the following day a meeting of Chrysostom's followers in an open field was dispersed by the imperial guards, and several weeks later the final blow fell. At the request of Chrysostom's enemies Arcadius sent a state secretary to the patriarch with orders to leave the city. Chrysostom's associates advised him to submit in order to avoid bloodshed. They recalled the aggressive acts of Lucius and warned that if Chrysostom appealed to the people they would certainly be attacked by the soldiers.⁴² Nothing could show more clearly the effectiveness of the *scholae* as instruments of imperial control.

Individual police assignments were also given to *scholares* on many occasions. Once, for example, Julian was so annoyed by the hymn-singing of a group of zealous Christian

⁴⁰ Palladius, *op. cit.*, 9 (Migne, PG 47, col. 33).

⁴¹ *Collectio Avellana*, Ep. 38.4 (ed. O. Guenther, p. 86).

⁴² Palladius, *op. cit.*, 10 (Migne, PG 47, col. 35).

maidens that he ordered the leader brought before him and had a guard slap her twice.⁴³ Important prisoners were often handed over to the guards for execution; Constantine did this with Martinianus, and Theodosius with Eugenius.⁴⁴ We get an inkling of other possible uses of *scholares* from the accounts of Ammianus of the manner in which emperors removed subjects whom they feared. Constantius was so disturbed by the prestige of his general Ursicinus that he decided to have him seized and executed secretly late at night, but at the last moment he changed his mind. Jovian had an ambitious rival thrown down a well and stoned.⁴⁵ Such extralegal actions were probably executed by *scholares*.

The most frequent type of police assignment, however, was connected with ecclesiastical affairs, which were the particular concern of the emperor. Constantine began this when he personally summoned the Council of Arles and determined its agenda; after this « the royal liberator will intervene in Church affairs as a master who has to be obeyed. »⁴⁶ Two episodes serve to illustrate this and the role of the *scholares* as tools of imperial control: Constantius' efforts to impose Arianism on the Church, and Maximus' persecution of the Priscillianists.

Constantius was a convinced Arian, and once having reunited the Empire he proceeded to impose his views on the Church.⁴⁷ When he found his way blocked by the opposition of Athanasius, the Emperor summoned a council to meet at Arles in 353 in the palace. The council obediently condemned Athanasius, and the Emperor then issued an order threatening with exile any bishop who refused to subscribe

⁴³ Theodoret, *HE* 3.19.

⁴⁴ Zosimus 2.28 (Martinianus); Sozomen, *HE* 7.2.4 (Eugenius).

⁴⁵ Ammianus 15.2.5-6 (Ursicinus) and 25.9.18 (Jovian).

⁴⁶ J. Palanque et al., *The Church in the Christian Roman Empire* (2 vols., London, 1949-1952), vol. 1, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Palanque, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-219.

to the council's condemnation.⁴⁸ The outstanding recalcitrant was Pope Liberius. First Constantius sent a eunuch to him with gifts to persuade him to submit. Then when this failed the Emperor sent state secretaries, *palatini* and counts. The word *palatini* is too vague for us to be sure whether it refers to *agentes in rebus* or *scholares*, but the fact that they were commanded by counts indicates that they were guards. Liberius was defended by his faithful people and this made it a matter of some difficulty to remove him, which explains why imperial guards were sent. They had to remove Liberius at night to avoid a clash with the Roman people.⁴⁹

Soon after this Constantius had Athanasius expelled from Alexandria and then sent George of Cappadocia to replace him as bishop.⁵⁰ The actual expulsion of Athanasius, involving a sharp clash with the populace, was carried out by the Duke of Egypt with his troops, but the installation of George was entrusted to two state notaries, *palatini* and a Count Heraclius.⁵¹ The latter had been sent from the palace, and as the bearer of the official imperial orders he was in charge of the operation. As a military count sent from the court he may surely be considered a commander of a *schola palatina*.

An even more serious affair was the repression of the Priscillianists. The Emperor Maximus had gained his throne in 383 by the deposition and execution of Gratian, and when the heresy of Priscillian was brought to his attention he seems to have determined to show himself rigidly orthodox to win the support of the Church. First he referred the matter to a synod, and when Priscillian and his associates appealed to

⁴⁸ Sulpicius Severus, *Chronic.* 2.39 (Migne, PL 20, coll. 150-151).

⁴⁹ Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum ad monachos* 37 (Migne, PG 25, col. 737); cf. Ammianus 15.7.10.

⁵⁰ Athanasius, *Apologia de fuga sua* 24 (Migne, PG 25, coll. 673-676).

⁵¹ Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum ad monachos* 48 (Migne, PG 25, coll. 751-754); cf. Palanque, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-181.

the Emperor he had them tried in the palace by his prefect. They were found guilty of sorcery and executed.⁵²

Throughout this affair a large role had been played by the Master of the Offices and his subordinates. At one point the Priscillianists regained their bishoprics by bribing the Master, and he also obligingly arranged to have the leading anti-Priscillianist removed from the court and taken back to Spain by his *officiales*, which almost certainly refers to *agentes in rebus*.⁵³ Now *scholares* were also definitely used. After Priscillian's execution the Emperor sent out « tribunes armed with full powers »; they were to execute the leading heretics and confiscate their goods.⁵⁴ These tribunes at court who were entrusted with so important a mission were clearly members of the imperial staff, i.e. commanders of *scholae*.

Explicit mention of the use of *scholares* occurs in connection with another ecclesiastical conflict in this period. Pope Damasus had gained control of the see of Rome in 368 after armed conflicts in the city between his partisans and opponents, and in fact his triumph was due mainly to the intervention of the urban prefect. Many groups in Rome refused to accept Damasus' authority and established independent churches with their own bishops. This continued for some years until about 381, when Theodosius issued a sweeping edict condemning all sects outside the Church. Relying upon imperial authority Damasus moved to crush rival groups and send into exile their lay and religious leaders, « which he did through the use of *gentiles scholares* with the permission of the civil authorities. »⁵⁵ Armed force was necessary, for

⁵² Dudden, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 217-240; Palanque, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 532-542.

⁵³ Sulpicius Severus, *Chronic.* 2.48-49 (Migne, *PL* 20, coll. 156-157).

⁵⁴ Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogus* 3.11 (Migne, *PL* 20, coll. 217-218); cf. Dudden, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 232-233.

⁵⁵ *Collectio Avellana*, *Ep.* 2.83 (ed. Guenther, p. 30); cf. Palanque, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 295-297. *Scolasticos* is actually the word used in the *Collectio Avellana*

some groups resisted and there were armed conflicts. We hear of one priest, Macarius of the Luciferians, who was wounded when soldiers broke up a night service he was conducting. Macarius was then sent into exile but died at Ostia of his wounds as he was about to embark.

The soldiers who broke up Macarius' service are called *officiales*.⁵⁶ If they are identified with the *gentiles scholares* referred to shortly afterwards in the same text, and there is every reason to do so, then we have here an example of the use of the *urbaniciani* discussed above. In any case it is clear that a detachment of *scholares* was used in Rome ca. 381 to enforce papal authority and crush popular resistance. The state had now become « the secular arm of the Church, » and the state gave its support through the *scholares*.⁵⁷

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Imperial influence was particularly important in connection with councils of the Church, for they were convoked by the emperor and received from him their agenda and very often their decisions as well.⁵⁸ Arrangements for bringing the bishops together and providing them with facilities were handled by the Master of the Offices and his subordinates. Thus when Constantius II summoned the Council of Rimini « *officiales* of the Master were dispatched to Illyricum, Italy, Africa, Spain and Gaul, and soon over 400 bishops of the West were gathered at Rimini—some willingly and some by compulsion. »⁵⁹ St. Hilary, when speaking of how imperial

text, not *scholares*, but the context and the adjective *gentiles* make it clear that soldiers and not schoolteachers are meant.

⁵⁶ *Collectio Avellana*, Ep. 2.79-81 (ed. Guenther, pp. 28-29).

⁵⁷ For "the state as the secular arm" see Palanque, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 714-717.

⁵⁸ J. Gaudemet, *L'Église dans l'empire Romain* (Paris, 1958), pp. 456-463; F. Dvornik, "Emperors, Popes and General Councils," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6 (1951), pp. 3-23.

⁵⁹ Sulpicius Severus, *Chronic.* 2.41 (Migne, PL 20, col. 152).

pressure was exerted on the bishops during Constantius' struggle with Athanasius, says that « the emperor is annoyed, the palace is in turmoil, the bishops run about, and the *officiales* of the Master fly to and fro. »⁶⁰

It is impossible to say whether or not these *officiales* were *scholares*, and in fact it is quite likely that they were members of the *schola* of *agentes in rebus*, for that *schola* was regarded as forming the larger *officium* of the Master of the Offices.⁶¹ These references do make it clear, however, that the emperors dealt with councils primarily through members of their own staffs, subordinates of the Master. When questions of security and order arose it was quite natural for *scholares* to be used.

Security was most notably a problem at the Council of Tyre, undoubtedly the most disorderly—one might even say uproarious—of all councils. It was convoked in 335 to judge Athanasius, who was charged with a number of serious crimes. Constantine had summoned the bishops to end the conflicts which were troubling the Church, and he sent as his representative the count Flavius Dionysius with full power of discipline « to show that the commands of the emperor are to be obeyed. »⁶² Dionysius had at his command a detachment of soldiers. They are variously called « military guards, »⁶³ « foreigners » (that is, *gentiles*),⁶⁴ « an imperial

⁶⁰ Hilarius, *Fragmenta historica*, B 1.4 (ed. Feder, p. 101).

⁶¹ Boak, p. 73.

⁶² Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.42; Theodoret, *HE* 1.29; cf. Palanque, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 124-128, regarding the Council of Tyre.

⁶³ στρατιῶται δορυφόροι: Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 71 (Migne, PG 25, col. 373).

⁶⁴ ἐθνικοὶ δῆμοι: *ibid.*, 15 (Migne, PG 25, col. 273). This connects the detachment of troops sent by Dionysius to Egypt with the bishops selected to go there to collect evidence against Athanasius, as recounted in *Apologia...* 72 (Migne, PG 25, col. 377).

detachment, »⁶⁵ and « those whom the emperor had sent to maintain order. »⁶⁶ It is clear that they were imperial guards.

Events showed that the guards were needed. One of the charges against Athanasius was that he had cruelly persecuted Arsenius and had even cut off his arm for sorcery. Athanasius was able to produce Arsenius whole and unharmed, and so reduced to absurdity the charges of his enemies. The bishops hostile to Athanasius were so incensed by this reverse that they attacked him in a body, and only the intervention of the guards on duty saved the patriarch from a violent death. The officers in charge took him out of the hall by a secret exit and that night sent him away on board a ship in order to avoid further danger.⁶⁷

The rank and role of Dionysius are known, and this shows us how the imperial staff functioned. Dionysius is called an ex-consular in his letter to the synod, and Athanasius calls him a count.⁶⁸ Rufinus is most explicit, saying that « the emperor sent from court one of his counts, to be aided by Archelaus, Count of the Orient. »⁶⁹ He was of senatorial rank, for the bishops address him with the Greek equivalent of *clarissimus*.⁷⁰ Furthermore, he has been identified with the Dionysius to whom an edict of 329 was addressed. It was

⁶⁵ βασιλική τις ὑπηρεσία: Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.43, of the troops who were with the bishops when they went from Tyre to Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ οἱ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως προστεταγμένοι: Sozomen, *HE* 2.25; cf. Theodoret, *HE* 1.30.

⁶⁷ Theodoret, *HE* 1.30; Sozomen, *HE* 2.25; Rufinus, *HE* 1.17.

⁶⁸ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.42 (ex-consular); Athanasius, *Apologia...* 71 (*comes*: Migne PG 25, col. 373).

⁶⁹ Rufinus, *HE* 1.16.

⁷⁰ Athanasius, *Apologia...* 78, 79 (λαμπρότατος: Migne, PG 25, coll. 389 and 392). For the equivalence, cf. D. Magie, *De Romanorum iuris publici sacrique vocabulis sollemnibus in Graecum sermonem conversis* (Leipzig, 1905), pp. 30-31, 51.

posted in Tyre, indicating that he was then *consularis Phoenices*, and this would explain his title of ex-consular.⁷¹

All of this makes it fairly certain that Dionysius was not a *schola* commander, for they were not raised to *comes* under Constantine and it certainly seems unlikely that a tribune served as governor of a province. Rather, Dionysius was one of the many trusted associates whom Constantine kept at court on his staff. They were honored with senatorial rank and the title of *comes*, and were often sent out to the provinces on special missions.⁷² Dionysius served as Constantine's representative at Tyre, presiding at sessions and guiding the discussions. « Those who were present kept silent and obeyed the count, » complains Athanasius, and it has been justly observed that Dionysius' position at Tyre was very similar to that of Constantine at Nicaea.⁷³ It is therefore very significant that *scholares* were used for security and maintaining order, rather than a detachment of troops, for example, from the forces at the disposal of the Count of the Orient. Relations with the Church were evidently regarded as falling within the emperor's personal sphere of responsibility, and his representatives used his personal troops.

It should be added that just as the Church accepted the emperor's claim to guide its councils,⁷⁴ so it also accepted the use of imperial troops to maintain order at them. Thus, as convocation of the Council of Constantinople drew near, the patriarch of Constantinople wrote to Saturninus asking him to take all necessary measures to maintain order and

⁷¹ C. Th. 9.34.4 (329); cf. O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.* (Stuttgart, 1919), pp. 39-40, 178.

⁷² Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.1; cf. A. Piganiol, *L'empire chrétien* (Paris, 1947), pp. 312-313.

⁷³ Athanasius, *Apologia...* 8, (Migne, PG 25, col. 264); cf. Dvornik, *op. cit.*, p. 9, and L. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (London, 1931), vol. 2, p. 142.

⁷⁴ Dvornik, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

tranquility when the bishops came together.⁷⁵ Saturninus had then served in the palace for over thirty years, was sent to the Goths as Theodosius' ambassador in 382, and was very probably Count of the Domestics at the time.⁷⁶

* * *

Scholares were also used for a number of administrative tasks. Usually these were connected with emergencies which required the immediate intervention of the emperor and for which he used members of his staff.

A good example of this is an edict of Theodosius which ordered that senior *scholares* should be sent out to the provinces to act as *curiosi*, supervisors of the imperial post. Previously this duty had been assigned to members of the *agentes in rebus*, 2 being sent to each of the provinces. There were over 100 provinces, and so when Julian slashed the number of *agentes* to 17 the supervision of the post must have practically lapsed. It was to correct this and the abuses which consequently arose that Theodosius sent out *scholares*. People traveling on private business had managed to use the imperial post without proper authorization, and some persons had even pretended to be *curiosi* themselves and so had succeeded in getting posthorses and provender allotments. The

⁷⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep.* 132 (Migne, *PG* 37, col. 228). The sessions of the Council were actually chaired by imperial commissioners, except for the sixth session when the Emperor and Empress themselves appeared. Although the representatives of Pope Leo insisted on a certain independence in doctrinal matters, they and all the other bishops agreed that the emperor had sole responsibility for calling and dismissing the Council and for all measures necessary to its security; cf. B. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461* (Oxford, 1922), vol. 3, pp. 314-315; M. Goemans in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (Würzburg, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 251-289.

⁷⁶ O. Seeck, "Saturninus no. 8," *PW* 2A (1921), coll. 215-216. No *comes domesticorum* is attested between 377 and 393. Cf. F. Grossi Condi, "Comes," *DE* 2, p. 486.

scholares sent out as *curiosi* were instructed to suppress these frauds, and were to visit all the stations, even the most remote.⁷⁷ Nine years later the supervision of the post was restored to the secret service.⁷⁸

Another administrative assignment was connected with the state's armament industry. Originally Roman soldiers bought their equipment from private suppliers or produced it in legionary workshops.⁷⁹ Under Diocletian, however, great imperial arsenals were established throughout the Empire, and these played the key role henceforth in supplying the army with weapons and armor. They were at first under the praetorian prefect, but sometime in the fourth century control was transferred to the Master of the Offices.⁸⁰

Armorers formed a special group, a caste of industrial serfs. They were organized in a guild and their position was fixed for life and hereditary; « they, together with their offspring, shall die in the profession to which they were born. » Strict production quotas were set by the government. So many tried to flee this servitude that it became necessary to brand armorers, a mark of ignominy formerly inflicted only on criminals and runaway slaves.⁸¹

Under these circumstances force was necessary for supervising the arsenals and keeping the workers obedient, and the evidence indicates that a military detachment was stationed at each *fabrica* under the command of a *prepositus* or

⁷⁷ *C. Th.* 6.29.6 (381); cf. E. Stein, "Untersuchungen zum Staatsrecht des Bas-Empire," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanist. Abt.* 41 (1920), pp. 195-251, esp. pp. 211-218.

⁷⁸ *C. Th.* 6.29.7 (390); cf. Stein, "Untersuchungen...", pp. 215-218.

⁷⁹ Vegetius 2.11; cf. MacMullen, pp. 23-48.

⁸⁰ *Not. Dig.*, Or. 11.18-39 and Occ. 9.16-39; cf. Boak, pp. 32, 86-89; R. MacMullen, "Inscriptions on Armor and the Supply of Arms in the Roman Empire," *AJA* 64 (1960), pp. 23-40.

⁸¹ *Nov. Th.* 6 (438: hereditary class); *C. Th.* 10.22.1 (374: production quotas); *C. Th.* 10.22.4 (398: brands).

tribune.⁸² These officers held key positions because of the arms at their disposal. Their loyalty was very important to the government, and so they were chosen from the select circle of palatine officers. We hear of two on close terms with a praetorian prefect, and another who was a friend of Malarich, tribune of the *gentiles*, and was involved in the Silvanus affair.⁸³ The senior NCO at an arsenal (*primicerius*) was promoted after two years' service to the rank of *protector*.⁸⁴

Service at the arsenals was therefore an important assignment, and it would seem natural that the Master of the Offices would send men from the troops under his own command, the *scholae*. We have, in fact, an inscription from Nicomedia which mentions a *Maximinus scutarius senator*; an arms factory is known to have been at Nicomedia and it seems clear that this refers to a member of the *schola scutariorum* assigned to duty there.⁸⁵ As a *senator* he held the second-highest NCO rank, just under *primicerius*.⁸⁶ We may presume that he had a detachment under his command, and in fact an edict of 414 refers to « those scholars to whom in consideration of their labors we have given command of army units in the field. »⁸⁷ Here again, then, we have an example of a *scholaris* assigned to a sensitive post.

A special assignment of guards is recorded in connection with Theodosius' interest in provincial government. In 380 he issued an edict directing that charges against governors should

82 O. Seeck, "Fabricenses," *PW* 6 (1909), coll. 1925-1930; D. Kalopothakes, "Fabrica," *DE* 3 (1922), pp. 18-20.

83 Ammianus 14.7.18 (prefect) and 15.5.9 (Silvanus affair).

84 *C. Th.* 10.22.3 (390).

85 *CIL* III. 14188; cf. *Not. Dig.*, Or. 11.27, and MacMullen, "Inscriptions...", p. 32, n. 82.

86 Grosse, pp. 108, 119-120.

87 *C. Th.* 7.4.34 (414).

be referred to himself.⁸⁸ Two years later, « in order that the punishment of one person may cause fear in many, » he had a governor found guilty of extortion brought back to the province he had governed to make restitution, and the ex-governor was conducted there in the custody of *protectores*.⁸⁹ Evidently this was a special measure, for when the law was repeated in the Code of Justinian it was replaced with a general reference: « he shall be conducted under suitable guard. »⁹⁰ But this is a good example of how guards could be used for administrative missions.

Conscription duty was an important type of administrative mission. By the middle of the fourth century direct conscription was rare. Normally the government was content to receive a money substitute and only drafted men in emergencies.⁹¹ Then *protectores* were sent out and were authorized to draft deserters, transients and sons of veterans—the classes generally subject to draft.⁹²

Similarly *protectores* were used to supervise the imperial post service. Imperial regulations prescribed precise limits on the burdens to be carried by the post's carriages, wagons and horses. To enforce these regulations the Masters of the Troops were instructed to station *protectores* at inspection points and to provide them with troops for arresting violators and detaining them until a report had been sent to the imperial court and acted upon.⁹³ This edict is significant for two points: it shows that *protectores* were dispatched

⁸⁸ C. Th. 9.27.2 (380).

⁸⁹ C. Th. 9.27.3 (382): *sub custodia protectorum*.

⁹⁰ C. Jus. 9.27.1: *cum custodia competenti*.

⁹¹ Ammianus 31.4.4 (money substitute); Ammianus 21.6.6 and C. Th. 6.27.13 (403: special levy); cf. Grosse, pp. 198-220.

⁹² C. Th. 7.18.10 (400); cf. Grosse, p. 204. In the sixth century, similarly, Justinian used *excubitores* to inspect the troops with the power of discharging any soldiers they judged unfit for active service; cf. Procopius, HA 24.8.

⁹³ C. Th. 8.5.30 (368).

with soldiers under their command, and it shows the close connection between *protectores* assigned to the field army commands and the imperial court. It is this type of close liaison which seems to indicate a close relation between *protectores* and *protectores domestici*, or—as one scholar has called them—central and peripheral *protectores*.⁹⁴

Similarly, *protectores* were stationed at frontier posts and played a role in preventing the export of contraband goods.⁹⁵ This was a matter of great importance to the central authorities, and it is difficult to judge whether these *protectores* were central or peripheral. It is the staff position of these *protectores* which is common to all the types of missions discussed.

Although we rarely hear of *scholares* we can presume that they were dispatched with their officers. An example of this is recorded for 365, when Valentinian, at the time of Procopius' revolt, sent a commission of investigation to Africa consisting of a *notarius*, a *domesticus* and a *scutarius*.⁹⁶

* * *

So far we have discussed the evidence concerning the various types of staff assignments given to guards. There are also several general references in the codes which show how important this was, and, in particular, how widespread was the use of guards for special missions.

An edict of 389 concerning the use of posthorses authorized warrants for five groups: counts, tribunes, *domestici*, *protectores* and *agentes in rebus*. Members of the last three are regarded as equal, all alike being entitled to two posthorses each.⁹⁷ It is certainly significant that the guards are treated

⁹⁴ Gigli, "I protectores...", pp. 387-389.

⁹⁵ *C. Th.* 7.16.3 (420).

⁹⁶ Ammianus 26.5.14.

⁹⁷ *C. Th.* 8.5.49 (386).

on a par with the secret service; by this time, clearly, they too were traveling all over the Empire on missions.

Not only were guards dispatched regularly, but they also enjoyed high status in the provinces as at court. When on a mission and reporting to a vicar they had the right of osculation, « for it is almost the same as sacrilege if the proper honor is not accorded to those who have been deemed worthy to touch Our purple. »⁹⁸ That is, they were to be greeted with respect by the deputies of the praetorian prefect, *virī spectabiles* and counts of the first rank.⁹⁹ At the receptions of a provincial governor they would take their place with other *palatini* in the second rank, which also included the governor's own senior officials (*primates*).¹⁰⁰ Every agent of the central ministries therefore was on a level with the three or four senior civil servants in a province, clear indication of the great prestige enjoyed by the emperor's service.

So common was the use of guards on missions that it was considered the alternative form of service, at least for officers. An edict of 392 describes *domestici* on active duty as men « who have either been engaged in Our service or, having been attached to state departments as *deputati*, have carried out official assignments. »¹⁰¹

We hear of units of *scholares* serving in the field in an edict of 396 concerning the supply of animal rations.¹⁰² This might apply simply to *scholares* attending the emperor in the field, however. Much more significant is an edict issued a few years later which refers to *protectores* and *domestici*

⁹⁸ C. Th. 6.24.4 (387).

⁹⁹ Stein (1), p. 70; M. Cosenza, *Official Positions after the Time of Constantine* (Lancaster, 1905), p. 99.

¹⁰⁰ CIL VIII.17896; cf. Mommsen, GS 8, pp. 486-487. As Mommsen notes, *palatini* can be taken in a general sense, and as discussed above the term was undoubtedly used to refer to guards.

¹⁰¹ C. Th. 6.24.5 (392).

¹⁰² C. Th. 7.4.23 (396).

« who have been ordered to protect any districts or have been assigned to some rather distant service, or who are under the orders of Our governors and are obedient to their command. » These guards were to receive their pay only if their official orders were no more than one year old.¹⁰³

Finally, an edict of 414 refers to *scholares* who after long service had been given command of army units in the field (*numeri*). As such they held the rank of tribune and were counts of the lower orders: *viri spectabiles*.¹⁰⁴ The *scholares* thus gained entry into the officer corps and became an elite corps in every sense. No doubt this highest privilege was won because of their extensive use on staff assignments.

* * *

In conclusion, one may say that the guards—*scholares*, *protectores* and *domestici*—served as members of the emperor's staff and were used in all matters with which the emperor was directly concerned. This means that not only did they protect the ruler's person, palace and family—the traditional duties of *corporis custodes*—but they also represented the emperor at Church councils, arrested and executed persons condemned by the sovereign for political reasons, carried out levies and inspections in times of emergency, inspected important imperial services such as the post and customs, and maintained order in the capitals.

To carry out these manifold duties units and individuals were often sent out on detached duty, as discussed above. In fact, it seems probable that most *scholares* and *domestici* were normally on detached duty away from the court, especially after 395 when the emperors ceased to take the field.

¹⁰³ C. Th. 7.4.27 (406).

¹⁰⁴ C. Th. 7.4.34; Grosse, p. 150.

Some direct evidence supports this, though it is from the sixth century. Procopius tells us in speaking of the *domestici* and *protectores* that « from ancient times some of these have had their residence in Byzantium, some in Galatia and some in other places. »¹⁰⁵ How early this practice began is unknown to us.

However, indirect evidence for earlier centuries is provided by what we know of the elite units especially assigned to the emperor's personal service. All the evidence indicates that these units were small in strength, that they alone served in the palace, and that most other guardsmen were employed on detached duty or else were not on active duty of any sort.¹⁰⁶ The following chapter therefore considers the elite units specially assigned to the emperor's service.

¹⁰⁵ Procopius, *HA* 24.25, tr. H. Dewing, *Procopius*, vol. 6 (London and New York, 1935), p. 289. The *Vita S. Theodori Syceotae* 25, 45 (cited by Jones, [3], p. 202, n. 115) mentions *protectores* at Ancyra.

¹⁰⁶ By the sixth century, if not earlier, at least some guardsmen were simply young men of wealth who only appeared for duty on ceremonial occasions; cf. Jones (2), pp. 657-658.

Chapter VII

ELITE UNITS

Two detachments of the *scholae* played especially important roles at court and deserve separate discussion. These were the units which served as the emperor's bodyguard (*candidati*) and his standard-bearers (*praepositi labarum*).

Little is known about the *candidati*, and that little has been interpreted very differently by various scholars. Mommsen thought that the positions of *scholaris* and *candidatus* were similar but that the *scholae* and *candidati* were two separate corps.¹ Seeck more or less agreed, saying the two corps were « related but not the same. »² Ernst Stein ingeniously argued that the *candidati* were simply the two *scholae* of *gentiles* under a new name, the old having been dropped because it had come to be used for pagans.³ Grosse suggested that the *candidati* formed a part of the *scholae*; « every *candidatus* was a *scholaris*, but not the opposite. » In any case, he concluded, the two troops were similar in recruitment, command and missions.⁴ Babut, on the other hand, had entirely opposite views, maintaining that all *scholares* were originally *candidati* with the rank of cadets. Then sometime around 400 some *scholares* were promoted to *protectores*, equivalent to captain.⁵ Most recently Jones has

¹ Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 231, n. 1.

² O. Seeck, "Candidatus no. 4," *PW* 3 (1899), coll. 1468-1469.

³ E. Stein, "Justinus no. 1," *PW* 10 (1919), col. 1314.

⁴ Grosse, pp. 96-97.

⁵ Babut (1), p. 285.

contented himself with calling the *candidati* the emperor's bodyguard selected from the *scholares*.⁶ In view of these disparate views it seems best to review the evidence briefly.

* * *

Ammianus mentions *candidati* three times. The first is a specific reference to Laniogaisus, a Frank who served as a tribune on Silvanus' staff and was his close adviser. He had been a *candidatus* of Constans and had been the only person with the Emperor when he was dying.⁷ The other two references are general: when Julian rashly took part in a battle, his *candidati* called to him from all sides to withdraw just before he was fatally wounded; Valens, fleeing after the battle of Adrianople, was accompanied by his *candidati* and all but one were burned up with him.⁸ It seems clear from these references that the *candidati* were personal bodyguards of the emperor and always attended him, unless, as Babut drily observes, emperors had a special guard when they were about to die.⁹

Laniogaisus is identified as a Frank. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that the only other fourth-century *candidatus* whose nationality we know is also identified as a Frank. This was a fair, red-haired soldier from Germany who was serving at the court of Constantius II as a *candidatus* and was sent to St. Hilarion by the Emperor to get help for a nervous disorder. Besides his native Frankish he could speak Latin, indicating a certain degree of assimilation.¹⁰

⁶ Jones (2), p. 613.

⁷ Ammianus 15.5.16.

⁸ Ammianus 23.3.6 (Julian) and 31.13.14, 16 (Valens).

⁹ Babut (1), p. 234, n. 2.

¹⁰ Hieronymus, *Vita S. Hilarionis* 22 (Migne PL 23, coll. 40-41); cf. Jones (2), p. 622. Actually all the manuscripts have Constantine, which has been amended in the Migne text without any argument (Migne, PL 23, col. 40, n. 6). Hilarion became a hermit ca. 315, so the chronology would suit Constantine as

The rank and position of Laniogaisus are significant. Constans was killed in 350, and the Silvanus affair developed in 355. Laniogaisus had therefore risen to the rank of tribune in five years and was serving as aide to a marshal. Clearly the rank of *candidatus* was relatively elevated. This is supported by what we hear of Constantius' *candidatus*, for he was brought to St. Hilarion « with all honors and an escort. »¹¹ And, finally, we know of just one other *candidatus*, and he is clearly an officer. In 549 an army of Solaveni invaded Thrace and defeated an imperial army commanded by one Asbadus. He is described as an « officer¹² in the guard since he served in the *candidati*. »¹³ This evidence from the sixth century confirms the scanty information we have from the fourth.

Our most important source for the *candidati* is also from the sixth century. It is a passage in the *De ceremoniis* of Constantine VII and comes from that part of the work which is based on a compilation of Peter the Patrician and therefore reflects conditions of the sixth century.¹⁴ It describes the creation of *protectores*, *domestici* and *candidati*, and since this text is so crucial and has never been discussed, it seems worthwhile to quote it in full:

Domestici and *protectores* are appointed as follows: Once it was done with the simple act of adoration. Now, however, the emperor first

well as Constantius. Cf. W. Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (London, 1882), vol. 3, pp. 52-53.

¹¹ Hieronymus, *loc. cit.* (Migne, PL 23, col. 40): *cum ingenti honore et comitatu*.

¹² δορυφόρος is used here, rather than ὑπασπιστής. The former clearly means officer of the guard, as in Procopius, BG 3.35.23-24, where one of Belisarius' δορυφόροι deserts and is immediately given command of an army and fleet.

¹³ Procopius, BG 3.38.5.

¹⁴ J. Bury, "The Ceremonial Book of Constantine Porphyrogenetos," *English Historical Review* 22 (1907), pp. 209-227 and 412-439.

approves a commission, then a decurion ushers the nominee, dressed in dark gray tunic, into the presence of the emperor when he is still with the Consistory after a session or when he is going to the Circus and has stopped before the Delphax. To a *protector*-designate the emperor then says « *Adoratus protector* »; to a *domesticus*-designate he says « *Adoratur protector domesticus*. » With these words he hands the approved commission to the nominee, and the latter then kisses the emperor's feet and departs....

Candidati are appointed as follows: when the emperor is going to the circus or participating in some other formation, the Master of the Offices presents himself along with the count of the sixth or seventh *schola*, the senior NCO's (*primicerii*) of the *candidati*, a military collar, and the *candidatus*-designate himself dressed in a red surplice over a white tunic....

As soon as the emperor enters his box at the circus the *schola* commander (count), if he is present, or, if he is not, a *primicericus*, hands the collar to the Master of the Offices who in turn offers it to the emperor with both hands while standing at his right. The emperor then gives the collar to the *candidatus*-designate, and the latter kneels, kisses the emperor's feet, and then rises.

Whoever receives the collar of a *candidatus* is automatically a member of the Court (*praesentalis*). If he is enrolled among the forty *candidati* he shall rank above all the supernumerary *scholares* and

shall be reckoned among those entitled to receive pay.¹⁵

The outstanding point to be noted here is that there is a sharp distinction between *protectores* on the one hand and *candidati* on the other. The latter receive their commissions differently, are dressed differently, receive special privileges, and are quite clearly of higher rank.

* * *

The mention of counts of the sixth and seventh *scholae* indicates a close connection with the *scholares*; since it is clear that the highest rank within the *candidati* was *primicerius*, the counts were evidently their commanders. And, in fact, a law of Justin I states that while in general the combination of official positions was forbidden, « exception shall be made for those who serve in two organizations which are closely connected and which they entered at the same time, as is the case with those who serve at the same time among the *candidati* and among our devoted *scholares*... » As Mommsen noted, this indicated that the two services were similar but not the same.¹⁶ *Candidati* were evidently attached to the sixth and seventh *scholae*, and this is confirmed by two statements in the *Chronicon Paschale*, to the effect that Gordian the Elder and Philip the Younger created two *scholae* of *candidati* which were called *seniores* and *iuniores* after their epithets. The first group was drawn from the legion of *scholares*, says the Chronicle, and « are now part of the sixth *schola* »; similarly the second group was drawn from the *scholares* and then became part of the seventh *schola*.¹⁷ This view is further

¹⁵ Constantinus VII, Porphyrogenitus, *De caeremoniis* 1.86 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 390-392).

¹⁶ C. J. 12.33.5, no. 4 (524); cf. Mommsen, GS 6, p. 231, n. 1.

¹⁷ *Chronicon Paschale*, s.a. 243 and 251 (ed. Dindorf, vol. 1, pp. 501-502); cf. Jullian, *De protectoribus*..., pp. 11-13.

supported by Cedrenus, for he says that *candidati* and « the class of *scholares* » were first created by Gordian II.¹⁸

These statements raise many problems and have been rejected by most scholars. Mommsen called them « unreliable Byzantine stories, » and Grosse flatly declared them « worthless. » Only Jullian accepted them fully.¹⁹

Nevertheless, a certain core of fact probably lies behind these accounts. The writer of the passages cited from the *Chronicon Paschale* lived in the mid-fourth century under Constantius II,²⁰ and his work reflects an independent and often quite accurate tradition. Thus he gives an unofficial version of Constantine's family, makes no reference to his supposed relationship with Claudius II and even calls him illegitimate.²¹ It is therefore very likely that his account of the origin of the *candidati* is true insofar as they actually were first created in the third century. There was then no corps of *scholares*, of course, but when it did come into being the *candidati* were evidently attached to it and this explains the chronicler's anachronistic references.

This explanation is corroborated by what we know of the military use of the term *candidatus*. It is first attested under Septimius Severus as a rank held by NCO's who were eligible for promotion to the centurionate. Generally these men were serving on the staff of a high official as his aides (*beneficiarii*) and stood to gain patronage through his patronage. The relationship was therefore a personal one.²² As the imperial court became progressively more militarized this

¹⁸ Georgius Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium* (ed. I. Bekker), vol. 1, p. 451.

¹⁹ Mommsen, *GS* 6, p. 231; Grosse, p. 63, n. 2; Jullian, *De protectoribus...*, pp. 11-13.

²⁰ *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Dindorf, vol. 2, p. 16 (Dindorf's preface).

²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 516-517.

²² *CIL* VIII.21056 (*candidatus eius*), III.6154 (of a governor of Moesia), VI.1410 (of a prefect of Rome). Cf. Domaszewski, pp. 33, 42; B. Kuebler, *DE* 2, "Candidatus no. 2," p. 78.

institution would naturally have commended itself to the attention of emperors interested in security.

The earliest evidence for white-uniformed soldiers at court is in the account given by the *Historia Augusta* of Gallienus' Decennalia in 262. A great ceremonial procession (*pompa*) moved towards the Capitol with the Emperor in the center. Around him were the priests, Senators, equestrians and « the white uniformed soldiery »; later we are told that on each side of Gallienus marched 500 soldiers carrying gilded spears.²³ These guards and Gallienus' staff officers were the soldiers in white around the Emperor.²⁴

The mention of guards with gilded spears is especially significant, for this was characteristic of Hellenistic courts and was introduced into Roman ceremonial at some time in the fourth century if not earlier. Gallienus' guards may be compared to the « companion cavalry »—also 1,000 in number—which escorted Antiochus IV in his great procession at Daphne and was armed with gilded weapons.²⁵ At the end of the fourth century Synesius tells us that the Roman emperors had long become accustomed to receiving visitors while surrounded by *scholares* « armed with gilded shields and gilded lances. »²⁶

²³ SHA, *v. Gall.* 8.

²⁴ A. v. Domaszewski, "Die Pompa an den Decennalien des Gallienus," *Rheinisches Museum* 57 (1902), pp. 510-516, argued convincingly for the reliability of this passage, showing its accuracy in many details corroborated by numismatic and epigraphic evidence. He seems to have believed, however, that white uniforms were worn by *all* of Gallienus' troops on this occasion, for by then "the class division of the army was entirely destroyed." But the passage in question (*v. Gall.* 8.1) clearly refers to the central group in the place of honor: around the Emperor. This group was composed of the Emperor himself, members of the highest classes, and the Emperor's military staff. It was the latter group which was dressed in white (*albato milite*). There is no reason whatever to extend this to the whole body of troops.

²⁵ Polybius 30.25.7.

²⁶ Synesius, *De regno* 12 (Migne, PG 66, col. 1084); cf. C. Lacombrade, *Le discours...*, p. 56 and n. 99. Domaszewski, "Die Pompa...", p. 513, suggested

Therefore it was the imperial guards who escorted Gallienus, as one would expect, and some, if not all, wore white uniforms. These, then, would have been the *candidati* of the third century and the precursors of the *scholae*.

It should be emphasized that the use of the term *candidatus* as a rank of honor at court is itself an important indication of an early origin. During the fourth century all soldiers at court normally wore a white tunic, whereas soldiers in the field regularly wore a tunic of a reddish-brown color which did not show traces of dirt and blood so readily.²⁷ All the general references cited by Mommsen, Seeck and Grosse in their studies of the *candidati*²⁸ actually refer to all the soldiers at court, not just the *candidati*. The title *candidatus* therefore goes back to a time when only a select group at court wore white, and this again points to a third-century origin.

Eventually white was replaced by more splendidly colored uniforms on formal occasions. There are no colored representations of the imperial court dating from the fourth century, but a mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore shows us the court dress of the fifth century. King Herod is pictured as a Roman emperor in *paludamentum* on a jewelled throne, and his guards are shown dressed in red tunics and purple cloaks. In another mosaic Aphrodisius, also shown in imperial regalia, is escorted by officers in blue tunics and red cloaks.²⁹ For the sixth

that the gilded spears were the "imperial emblems" mentioned by Herodian 5.4.9 and 5.6.8), but these passages seem to refer to ensigns, and in any case we never hear of any gilded "imperial emblems."

²⁷ P. Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Note Agiografiche* (Rome, 1928), pp. 216-219. Grosse, p. 63, notes that while the origin of the term *candidati* is not definitely known it is clearly connected with the uniform worn by members of the corps.

²⁸ See above notes 1, 2, 4. Jones (2), p. 613, implicitly follows them when he refers to the "white uniformed *candidati*." All guards were white-uniformed.

²⁹ Franchi de' Cavalieri, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226; cf. J. Wilpert, *Die Römischen Mosaiken und Malereien*, 3rd ed. (4 vols., Freiburg L.B., 1924), vol. 1, pp. 489-493, and vol. 3, plates 66-69.

century we have the famous mosaic of San Vitale which shows Justinian surrounded by guards, two of whom wear red tunics and one a green tunic.³⁰ By the fifth century white was no longer the color used in ceremonies, and undoubtedly this practice goes back to the period of Diocletian and Constantine when Eastern forms of pageantry were adopted. The title *candidatus* (« white-clad ») would not have meant much in the fourth century, therefore, whereas in the third century it would still have had significance as a mark of honor and privilege.

* * *

Little else is known about the *candidati*, but this confirms the elite character of the corps. From the passage in *De ceremoniis* quoted above, it appears that the authorized strength of the *candidati* was forty men. This seems too small a number for anything equivalent to a *schola*, and may rather be compared to the fifty officers assigned to each *schola* by Julian.³¹ And in fact, Vegetius says that in his day (probably under Valentinian III)³² the *candidati* were junior officers (*principales*) « who enjoy privileges. » This cryptic statement comes at the end of his discussion of officers and NCO's and contains less information than any of the foregoing descriptions, in which he describes the positions of all the staff and tactical

³⁰ Wilpert, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, plate 109. A good detail picture showing the guards is in G. Bovini, *Chiese di Ravenna* (Novara, 1957), p. 137.

³¹ *C. Th.* 6.24.1 (362).

³² The date of Vegetius' work is not secure, and it has been ascribed by different scholars to periods ranging from the reign of Theodosius I to Valentinian III. Grosse, p. 24, argues for the reign of Valentinian III. The most recent survey of the problem is by V. Sirago, *Galla Placidia e la trasformazione politica dell'Occidente* (Louvain, 1961), pp. 465-476, who ascribes the work to the reign of Theodosius I. His arguments are based on the ideas of the work, however, rather than specific terminology, and, as Grosse and Jones have pointed out, Vegetius was not in touch with the political conditions of his day (Grosse, p. 24: *Stubentaktiker*; Jones, [2], p. 1036: *laudator temporis acti*).

charges assigned to *principales*, so that it seems that the *candidati*, while recognized as junior officers, did not have a place in field units.³³

Other evidence from the fifth and sixth centuries confirms our hypothesis that the *candidati* formed an elite unit of the *scholae*. The account of the election and coronation of Leo I in 457 shows the *candidati* playing a key role. A great gathering of troops and civilians was held on the Campus of the Hebdomon. Leo was proclaimed, crowned with a military collar, and then received the acclamations of the people.

At this point Leo had completed the formal coronation ceremony and was ready to don the regalia. The *candidati* then covered him from view with their shields, and, still on the tribunal, he put on the imperial vestments and showed himself to the people.³⁴ Clearly the *candidati* formed the imperial escort and were at hand for this personal service.

Despite what seems to have been their small number the *candidati* were assigned a section of the Chalce, the great vestibule of the palace at Constantinople. The original Chalce was built by Constantine and was probably like the large vestibule of Galerius' palace at Salonica.³⁵ During the Nika Revolt of 532 the mob burned down the Chalce, and we are told that the destruction included the « porticos of the *scholares*, of the *protectores*, and of the *candidati*. »³⁶ The *candidati*, therefore, had their own area in the Chalce, and in this respect, at least, were on a par with the *scholares* and *protectores*. Babut has doubted this and says flatly that the chronicler is wrong, and that it was only after the Nika

³³ Vegetius 2.7; cf. H. Parker, *The Roman Legions*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 205-208, for a discussion of *principales* and staff and tactical charges.

³⁴ *De. cer.* 1.91 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 410-411); cf. Bury (1), pp. 314-316.

³⁵ C. Mango, *The Brazen House* (*Arkeologisk-kunsthistoriske Meddelelser*, vol. 4, no. 4: Copenhagen, 1959), pp. 22-23.

³⁶ *Chronicon Paschale*, s. a. 6039 (ed. Dindorf, vol. 1, pp. 620-621); cf. Bury (1), pp. 39-41.

Revolt that the *candidati* received their own quarters.³⁷ This seems rather arbitrary since there is no evidence whatever for any change in the status of the *candidati* during the sixth century. On the other hand there is the significant fact that the corps had its own senior NCO (*primicerius*). This is attested not only by the passage quoted above from *De ceremoniis*, which implies the existence of a long tradition, but also by an inscription securely dated to 450 which refers to one *Antiochos candidatus premecerius*.³⁸ Originally this title indicated the person at the top of the roll in seniority, and shows that the *candidati* had its own *matricula*. Furthermore, the fact that *primicerius* was the highest title in the corps does not argue against its independence. On the contrary, it may be compared to the corps of state secretaries (*tribuni et notarii*) which similarly served on the emperor's personal staff and was also headed by a *primicerius*. The *notarii* had no higher officer in command because they were under the direct command of the emperor; the *primicerius* of the *notarii*, indeed, ranked as a count of proconsular status, an extraordinarily high rank.³⁹ We may presume that the *candidati* had a similar position: serving as part of the emperor's personal staff.

After the destruction of the Chalce in 532 it was rebuilt by Justinian, and this is the structure which figures in the *De ceremoniis* and can therefore be described with some degree of precision. Recent scholarship is agreed that the inner area of the Chalce was divided among the separate halls of three corps of guards: the *scholares*, *candidati* and the *excubitores*, a new corps formed in the fifth century. By the sixth century, therefore, the *candidati* had achieved parity with the other corps of guards, at least insofar as the security

³⁷ Babut (1), p. 239 and n. 3.

³⁸ *CIL* VI.32953.

³⁹ *C. Th.* 6.10.3 (381).

of the palace itself was concerned, and very likely this was true in the fourth and fifth centuries, too.⁴⁰ There is even some evidence that in Justinian's Chalce the hall of the *candidati* was the longest of the three.⁴¹

Nevertheless, the *candidati* remained connected with the *scholares*, and this is confirmed as late as the sixth century by the account of the election of Justin I. When Anastasius died in 518 without any indicated heir, a military assembly of the palatine corps was summoned by Justin, as commander of the *excubitores*, and Celer, Master of the Offices, « whose commands were obeyed by the *candidati* and the other *scholares*. »⁴²

* * *

Since the *candidati* were the emperor's personal body-guard, it is they who are pictured with him in official portraits. Most of the portraits which have survived do not allow us to form more than a general picture of the appearance and dress of a guard, but there is a very important one which gives significant details. This is the well-known mosaic of Justinian and his escort in San Vitale. The figures of the guards attending the Emperor are perfectly preserved, and their color and details make this a unique document. As has been noted above, it is clear that at least on ceremonial occasions the *candidati* wore splendidly colored uniforms, not white.

⁴⁰ A. Vogt, *Le Livre des Ceremonies: Commentaire* (2 vols., Paris, 1935-1940), vol. 1, pp. 54-57 and map 2. Vogt's reconstruction of the Chalce is based largely on the suggestions of J. Bury, "The Great Palace," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 21 (1912), pp. 210-225, especially p. 212. Most recently certain revisions have been suggested by R. Guiland, "Autour du Livre des Ceremonies," *Byzantinoslavica* 17 (1956), pp. 58-97, but these do not concern the general aspects discussed here.

⁴¹ Bury, "The Great...", p. 212.

⁴² *De Cer.* 1.93 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, p. 426).

Furthermore, the mosaic clearly shows the military collar (*torques*) worn by each guard. This is itself a significant indication of the high status of *candidati*, for the *torques* was one of the main military decorations conferred on enlisted men for valor. Those so honored wore the collar in dress parades, and received substantial advantages including preferment in promotion and increased pay. Thus, an inscription in Pannonia left by an early imperial legionary gives his rank as *miles torquatus et duplarius*: « an enlisted man decorated with the *torques* and the right to double pay. »⁴³ Vegetius lists *torquati* among the minor NCO ranks, and adds that « the golden *torques* was once the reward of valor, and the soldier who earned it would sometimes receive double pay. »⁴⁴ There is a very noticeable shift from the present tense to the perfect in this passage, which implies that in Vegetius' time the *torques* had ceased to be a decoration and had become instead an emblem of rank. It is in this sense that the *torques* worn by the *candidati* must be understood.

All extant representations of the imperial guards show the *torques* in outline,⁴⁵ but only the San Vitale mosaic clearly shows the medallion (*bullæ*) attached to the collar and worn on the chest. Two of them are shown, and they differ because of a difference in rank between the two guards wearing them. The guard nearer the Emperor wears a *bullæ* with a blue stone set in gold. The guard to his left wears a *bullæ* of a different sort, for on it is a portrait.⁴⁶

⁴³ CIL III.3844; cf. Domaszewski, pp. 68-70; Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-232; Grosse, p. 238.

⁴⁴ Vegetius 2.7: *torques aureus solidus virtutis praemium fuit, quem qui meruisset praeter laudem interdum duplas consequeretur annonas*. The preceding verbs are *consecuntur*, *demetiuntur*, *figant*, *praestant*.

⁴⁵ R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen* (Berlin, 1929), p. 41.

⁴⁶ K. Hauck, "Un'immagine imperiale a Ravenna non ancora identificata," *Felix Ravenna fas.* 80 (1959), pp. 28-40.

The use of precious metals and stones to adorn one's dress and uniform was a jealously guarded prerogative of the emperor and his servants. In general it was strictly forbidden to adorn one's uniform or horse with gold or precious stones, « for this pertains to the imperial dress and ceremonial. » This prohibition did not, however, extend to members of the palatine corps for they were considered members of the emperor's personal staff and hence entitled to a share in his glory. Thus, an edict of Theodosius II refers explicitly to the special cloth and purple dye « made for the use of the Emperor alone and his household. » Even the ushers of the palace wore tunics spangled with gold, and the emperor's guards—one of the most privileged groups at court—certainly shared the right to wear decorated uniforms. A helmet now in Budapest indicates that they wore helmets similar to the emperor's and, like his, adorned with sparkling stones, although their stones were only of paste. It is in connection with these facts that one can appreciate the full significance of the golden collar and gem-adorned *bullæ* worn by the first guard.⁴⁷

The portrait on the *bullæ* of the second guard has an additional and quite particular meaning. It is a profile portrait, and the shape of the nose and other characteristics identify it clearly as a representation of the Emperor Justinian. He is shown with lance and shield, and wearing the state helmet adorned with pearls which was worn on ceremonial occasions. This was, therefore, an official portrait of the monarch in full regalia.⁴⁸ The guard who was honored with the privilege of bearing the Emperor's portrait is also the

⁴⁷ C. Th. 10.21.1 and 2 (369 and 382); C. J. 11.9.1 and 11.9.2 against use of gold and gems; C. Th. 10.21.3 (424) concerning purple cloth; Ammianus 26.6.15 concerning palace ushers. Cf. A. Alföldi, "Eine spätromische Helmform," *Acta Archaeologica* 5 (1934), pp. 99-144, especially pp. 108-110; MacMullen, pp. 179-180, on the importance of uniforms and their connection with rank.

⁴⁸ Hauck, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

guard who is holding the Emperor's shield, recognizable as such by the Christogram on it. That each emperor had his own shield which was confided to a particular officer is clearly established by the figures on the base of the Column of Arcadius, where each emperor is accompanied by an officer holding a shield with the Christogram as well as other guards with shields bearing different insignia.⁴⁹ The guard holding the emperor's shield was the imperial guard *par excellence*, the emperor's *armiger*, who never left his side even during the most solemn state ceremonies.⁵⁰ He was therefore what we would call captain of the guard, and this explains the honor conferred upon him of wearing the imperial portrait.

This was, it should be stressed, no slight honor. The emperor's portrait was considered to be in some degree a representative of the sovereign, a sign that he conferred a part of his authority on its possessor. For this reason every judge and every governor conducted official business with an imperial portrait nearby. During court sessions an image of the sovereign was placed on a separate table with a white cloth under it and candles in front, the whole resembling in many ways the altar of a church.⁵¹ The imperial portrait was also used on the insignia and commissions (*codicillus*) given high officials, and as an extension of this high army officers had the imperial portrait on their shields. A diptych of Stilicho shows him holding a shield with a medallion in the center showing the two Emperors, and from the *Notitia*

⁴⁹ J. Kollwitz, *Oströmische Plastik der Theodosianischen Zeit* (Berlin, 1941), plate 6 and pp. 34-35.

⁵⁰ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 3.220-223 and 4.336-369. These lines concern Narses the *protospatharius*, a new office dating from the beginning of the reign of Justin II. Cf. Stein (2), p. 525, n. 1. This change was part of the general shift to new corps discussed in Chapter IX below.

⁵¹ Severianus of Gabala, *De mundi creatione* Or. 6.5, cited by H. Kruse, *Studien zur officiellen Geltung des Kaiserbildes im römischen Reiche* (Paderborn, 1934), pp. 79-80.

Dignitatum it appears that such portraits were also on the shields of the marshals at court (*magister militum praesentales*), Master of the Offices, and Count of Domestics: in short, the leading military figures at court.⁵²

Such is the background of the portrait on the *torques* of the San Vitale guard. It is a striking confirmation of the high rank and status accorded the imperial guards that their commander was so honored.⁵³

* * *

A second elite detachment of guards is recorded, the provosts of the imperial standards (*praepositi labarum*). Their duty was to carry the emperor's personal flag, the *labarum*. This placed them in an especially close relation to the sovereign, for as his standard-bearers their place in battle was by definition close to him. Even in the fifth century, when the emperors no longer took the field personally, this relationship was still important. An edict of 416 confers important privileges on the provosts on the ground that « these men are worthy of both the senatorial name and special exemption for they are made illustrious by attendance at Our side. »⁵⁴

The *labarum* was intimately connected with the conversion of Constantine to Christianity and his efforts to make it the state religion. Just before the decisive battle with Maxentius

⁵² Kruse, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-110; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (Jena, 1938), pp. 204-207.

⁵³ Hauck, *op. cit.*, p. 34, explains the portrait as a means of awing the Germans in the guard, because they regarded the imperial image as sacred and possessed of a magical force (*energeia*). This seems highly doubtful, especially when the wide use of the imperial portrait by non-German officials is considered.

⁵⁴ *C. Th.* 6.25.1 (416). Sozomen, *HE* 9.4, states that when Stilicho set out for Constantinople to act in place of Honorius he took along as proofs of his status letters from the Emperor and also the Emperor's *labarum*. The *labarum* was therefore one of the major emblems of the imperial dignity.

at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine had his famous dream in which the monogram of Christ appeared and the words « In this sign you will conquer. » Constantine then had a standard made of gold, studded with precious jewels, and bearing the Chi Rho monogram. After the victory, which he ascribed to the promised divine intervention, Constantine had a statue of himself set up in Rome. This showed him holding the *labarum* standard, a startling innovation, for always before emperors had entrusted their standard to a guard. On the statue was an inscription stating that Constantine had triumphed through the sacred monogram.⁵⁵

Thereafter the motif of the emperor with *labarum* was one of the dominating themes of imperial iconography.⁵⁶ The *labarum* became a symbol of the Empire's devotion to Christ. It was carried before the troops to spur them on, and was believed to be a talisman of victory and itself under divine protection. Sozomen reports the belief that « no soldier who bore this standard in battle ever fell, through any dark calamity such as is wont to happen to the soldiery in war, or was wounded, or taken prisoner. »⁵⁷

Under these circumstances the *labarum* itself gained great significance, and the guards assigned to the detachment of standard-bearers had an important mission. Constantine ordered that the *labarum* should be entrusted to fifty *protectores* of the Christian faith who would carry it in turn.⁵⁸ This was therefore

⁵⁵ A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 16-24, 42, 83.

⁵⁶ H. Leclercq, "Labarum," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* 8 (1928), pp. 927-962, gives a general survey of the sources and facts concerning the *labarum*.

⁵⁷ Sozomen, *HE* 1.4, tr. C. Hartranft, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen* (rptd. Grand Rapids, 1952), p. 242. Cf. Theodoret, *HE* 1.25, in which Constantine writes to Sapor: "My soldiers believe in this God [Christ]. They bear His standard and through Him they have gained great victories."

⁵⁸ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 2.8.

a truly elite unit, made up entirely of officers. We hear nothing more of the unit until the edict of 416 mentioned above. This states that any *domestici* who are promoted to the position of *praepositus labarum* shall thereby become members of the senatorial order with ex-consular rank and immunities, and shall be ranked with the ten senior members of the *domestici*.⁵⁹

The rank of *praepositus* in the army of the Later Empire was more or less equivalent to that of tribune, so that the status of the guards of the *labarum* was an exalted one indeed.⁶⁰ It is strange that we never hear of a single individual who held one of these posts, which would seem to have been a highly desired assignment and a perfect steppingstone to further advancement. The explanation for this may lie in the opening words of the edict of 416: « If any members of the most devoted *scholae* or *domestici* should be promoted by Our decree and by the labors of their service.... » The significant words are the last four, because they seem to imply that promotion to the unit was gained through seniority rather than through patronage. It was an admitted fact that commissions in the palatine corps were gained « by various routes, » and the words of the edict seem to imply that posts such as *praepositi labarum* were gained *ex labore* only. They would then have been veterans finishing out their term of service, and this would be why they have left no mark in history.

An important consideration which corroborates this view is the fact that their tasks were originally by no means nominal.

⁵⁹ C. Th. 6.25.1 (416), repeated in C. J. 12.18.1.

⁶⁰ W. Ensslin, "Praepositus no. 6," *PW*, Supp. no. 8 (1956), coll. 553-555. The *praepositi labarum*, from their duties and status as *domestici*, are clearly army officers, and therefore the status of the various civilian *praepositi* attached to the imperial household (discussed by Ensslin under "Praepositi no. 2") is not relevant here.

Constantine was accustomed to dispatch the *labarum* to various units during battle to encourage the men to fight.⁶¹

Later, when the emperors ceased to take the field, the duties of the *praepositi* became purely ceremonial. The original *labarum* of Constantine was kept in a shrine in the Great Palace at Constantinople, and an honor guard watched over it night and day.⁶² It was only taken out on important state occasions, such as an imperial reception. Constantine VII has left us an account of the reception accorded an embassy from Tarsus in 946. When the ambassadors were ushered in, all the palatine corps were drawn up in splendid array, and on each side of the imperial thrones the banners, ensigns and *labara* were held high.⁶³ One can well imagine that this sort of task would be entrusted to veterans whose service had earned them the right to a quiet berth but who were still able to perform military ceremonies smartly.

⁶¹ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 2.7.

⁶² Socrates, *HE* 1.2.

⁶³ *De cer.* 2.15 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, p. 575; cf. Reiske's note, vol. 2, p. 645). Whether the original *labarum* continued to be used is not known and is of course very doubtful. From Sozomen, *HE* 9.4, regarding Stilicho's departure with a *labarum*, it is clear that each emperor had at least one *labarum* for his own use, if not more. The question is obscure, as noted by R. Grosse, "Labarum," *PW* 12 (1925), col. 243.

Chapter VIII

IMPERIAL CEREMONIES

« The imperial art of Byzantium had but one purpose: to celebrate the supreme power of the emperor. »¹ Similarly, the official ceremonies of the Empire were designed to glorify the sovereign. An elaborate « court liturgy » was developed, and solemn processions and pageants were held regularly to impress upon all classes the greatness of the ruler. He was the guardian of the state, the ever-victorious leader, the chosen of Christ. In all of these ceremonies the imperial guards played an important role. This can best be seen by examining in detail three major ceremonies: the consular procession, triumph and coronation.

* * *

Until its abolition by Justinian the consulship remained the highest honor a subject could aspire to and was the crown of both the military and the civil *cursus honorum*. So great was its prestige that emperors themselves often assumed the office, and on these occasions the old *processus consularis* was revived in full splendor.

Our best sources for this ceremony in the fourth century are the panegyrics written by Claudian in honor of Honorius' fourth and sixth consulships. The first opens with an explicit description which deserves to be quoted in full:

Once more the year is opened under imperial auspices and bears an imperial name. The fasces are not carried to a private house now but serve a consul who is emperor.

¹ A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantine* (Paris, 1936), p. 1.

First in the procession are the marshals and ministers, all wearing the dress of patricians. They are followed by the banners of Quirinus, and then comes the legion of soldiers known by their uniform of many colors. They are in parade dress, and they have put aside temporarily the standards of war and follow a lictor instead of the eagles. The toga-clad soldier smiles, the Senate shines in the midst of the camp. The soldiers are surrounded by the senators of the palace and, having put aside shield and helmet, now wear the senatorial cloak (*trabea*) and help carry the sacred curule chair. Let it not shame these warriors to carry laurel-crowned axes in a civilian ceremony and to wear the Latin toga instead of a shining breastplate while their steeds play in the pastures of Eridanus and their iron chariot stands unused.²

² Claudian, *De quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti*, 1-17:

Auspiciis iterum sese regalibus annus
induit et nota fruitur iactantior aula,
limina nec passi circum privata morari
exultant reduces Augusto consule fasces.
cernis ut armorum proceres legumque potentes
patricios sumant habitus? et more Gabino
discolor incedit legio positisque parumper
bellorum signis sequitur vexilla Quirini.
lictori cedunt aquilae ridetque togatus
miles et in mediis effulget curia castris.
ipsa Palatino circumvallata senatu
iam trabeam Bellona gerit parmamque removet
et galeam sacras umeris vectura curules.
nec te laurigeras pudeat, Gradive, secures
pacata gestare manu Latiaque micantem
loricam mutare toga, dum ferreus haeret
currus et Eridiani ludunt per prata iugales.

Cf. C. Jullian, "Processus Consularis," *Revue de Philologie* 7 (1883), pp. 145-163, especially pp. 150-159.

If this passage is analyzed one can see behind the clouds of rhetoric a fairly complete description of the consular procession. First come the lictors bearing the fasces, as prescribed by ancient tradition. After them is the first group of the procession, composed of the chief civilian and military dignitaries of the Empire. These would include the marshals, the urban and praetorian prefects, and the other high officials distinguished by the title *illustris*. They wear « patrician dress »; that is, they wear the official costume of the patrician rank, and as such follow the consul of the year in rank and so hold the place of honor in his procession.³ By the end of the fourth century the patriciate was freely conferred on men who had served as marshal, Master of the Offices or prefect.⁴

After them the « banners of Quirinus » are carried, that is, the flags of the municipal corporations. These are mentioned in the account of Gallienus' procession in the *Historia Augusta*: *vexilla centena et praeter ea quae collegiorum erant*.⁵ These are followed by « the legion in many colors, »⁶ evidently a corps known for the splendor of its uniform, undoubtedly to be identified as one of the *scholae palatinae*. As discussed in the last chapter, the privilege of wearing decorated uniforms was restricted to the soldiers in the emperor's service. The *Historia Augusta* mentions a special type of tunic decorated with gold embroidery (*paragauda*) which was conferred by third-century emperors on favorites.⁷ One passage in particular is most significant, for it records that Aurelian, under whom a corps of *protectores* first appears, was « the first to give his soldiers tunics decorated with bands of embroidery, whereas previously they had received only

³ Joh. Lydus, *De magistratibus* 1.17 (costume); Stein (1), p. 220 (rank).

⁴ C. J. 12.3.3 (ca. 474-481); cf. Bury (1), p. 20.

⁵ SHA, *v. Gall.* 8.6.

⁶ The translation is based on that of Jullian, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁷ SHA, *v. Claudii* 17.6; *v. Probi* 4.5; *v. Aur.* 15.4.

straightwoven tunics of purple. »⁸ Since purple was the color worn by the emperor and his court, this clearly concerns palatine troops, and in fact the *missorium* of Theodosius shows four guards dressed in embroidered tunics.⁹ All these considerations make it more than likely that the *discolor legio* mentioned by Claudian is one of the *scholae palatinae*.

Next come more lictors and behind them soldiers dressed in the *trabea* and with them the « Senate of the Palace » (*palatinus senatus*). The latter phrase cannot refer to the Roman Senate, for that body follows behind near the Emperor. Instead we have to understand this as referring to the chief functionaries of the palace who received the rank of senator, especially the silentiaries and decurions. An edict of Honorius refers to them in 415 as already of senatorial rank; they are « elected to the most august and venerable Order. »¹⁰ This group might therefore be called with only slight poetic license a *curia*, and with them no doubt were the other leading palatine officials with senatorial rank.

Along with these civilian dignitaries (*palatino circumvallata senatu Bellona*) march other units of palatine troops. Most are without arms, but some carry axes. It is clear that these troops are the *scholae palatinae*. The unarmed group is probably composed of the various units of *scutarii*, while those carrying axes may plausibly be identified as the *gentiles*. It is known that some *scholae* were armed with axes, and as this was considered a barbarian weapon it was probably the *gentiles*.¹¹ Since nothing is said about the weapons of the

⁸ SHA, v. Aur. 46.6.

⁹ R. Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts* (Berlin, 1933), plates 96, 97.

¹⁰ C. Th. 6.23.1 (415).

¹¹ The axe is pictured among the weapons of the *scholae* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, Or. 11 and Occ. 9, and is mentioned by Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 3.178. Procopius, HA 7.15, indicates that even in the sixth century the axe was considered a barbarian weapon. On the use of the axe and its origin see Grosse, pp. 336-337.

discolor legio, and since the adjective emphasizes their colorful appearance, we may now distinguish them from the other *scholae*. Very likely this was the *schola* of *protectores*, an elite unit within the *scholares* which was formed at the end of the fourth century and which will be discussed in the next chapter.¹²

Furthermore, it seems most likely that not all members of the *scholae* marched with the palatine *officiales* of senatorial rank. There were only 30 silentiaries and a correspondingly limited number of senatorial officials in the other palatine services, and it would have been quite out of proportion to have had all 2,500 *scholares* mixed with them. Claudian says that the *scholares* in question were wearing the *trabea*, which had become closely associated with the senatorial order.¹³ These *scholares* of senatorial rank are probably to be identified with the senior members of the *protectores* and *scholares* who received senatorial rank. This is not sure, however, since the edicts conferring this privilege are dated 416 and 427.¹⁴ Perhaps, however, this only made formal an established practice.

This concludes the first group of the procession. Clearly the place of honor was accorded to the great dignitaries of the Empire, and behind them marched their chief subordinates.

Next come the images of the Emperor's ancestors and then the Emperor himself. He is surrounded by the Senate, « all the nobility reared by Tiber and Latium » (11.577-578). As the newly elected consul, he sits in the curule chair, and as Emperor, he is borne aloft by his « white-clad cohorts, carried upon the shoulders of chosen warriors who so proudly uphold their godlike burden » (11.568-570). Evidently these

¹² Jullian, *op. cit.*, p. 153, considers this group the corps of *protectores et domestici*. Such a group never existed.

¹³ Thus a law of Valentinian III, *C. Th.* 10.10.33 (426), refers to the Senate as *trabeata quies*.

¹⁴ *C. Th.* 6.24.9 (416) and 6.24.10 (427).

troops who wear white even in a parade are the Emperor's *candidati*, and it is they who have the task of carrying his chair.

Finally, in a last group come nobles from Gaul, Spain and the other provinces. No other groups are mentioned, and in particular no other military units were included. Evidently, as befitted the last important institution dating from the ancient Republic, a consul's inauguration was essentially a civilian affair. The prominent role assigned to the *scholae* is all the more significant.

Certain additional details of importance are given by Corippus in the poem he wrote celebrating the consulship of Justin II in 565. Despite the passage of years the ceremony remained essentially the same.

Justinian had suppressed the consulate in 542, and succeeding emperors assumed the consular dignity in the first year of their reigns.¹⁵ Therefore Justin II assumed the consulate shortly after succeeding to the throne. Corippus has left us a detailed account of primary importance and touching upon many points left unclear by Claudian. The most relevant passages of Corippus' account are therefore translated here:

The imperial palace was decorated for the festival, and at the order of the sovereign all the dignitaries came together there. Each *schola* of the palace was commanded to take its assigned position. They quickly obeyed and soon all the imperial corps (*omnis sacrorum vis officiorum*) were drawn up in their proper order. These included the *decani*, the *cursores*, the *agentes in rebus*, the white-clad unit (*turba*) under their palatine tribunes, and the company (*numerus*) of *protectores*—all under the command of the Master

¹⁵ Bury (2), pp. 346-348.

of the Offices, each drawn up in its proper uniform and formation.

Outside the guard (*excubitus*) assigned to the imperial palace was drawn up under the long porticoes [of the Royal Way] beginning at the palace portal. They lined the right and left of the Way and seemed to form two walls from the manner in which they held their gilded shields close together under their upraised spears. Each man was armed with a sword as well, and wore high boots. Standing close to one another they presented an extraordinarily impressive picture, for these men were remarkable for their height, their broad shoulders and their brawny arms.... Thus Olympus was rivaled in splendor by the imperial palace, for there too all was impressive and all was brilliant.¹⁶

Later the procession itself is described as follows:

The Senators began the procession. They were splendidly dressed, some wearing the *trabea*, others the toga. Each member of the Venerable Order had his proper place. After them came the imperial corps (*divina officia*), led by lictors who supervised the order of each group. Next came the cohorts in close order, guided by a lictor. Part of them guarded the right and left sides of the emperor. Behind a large detachment (*excubitus*) guarded the rear with their shields, and after them came the units (*phalanges*) of *protectores*, gleaming with tawny gold on their uniforms and spears. And in the midst of these troops was the consul himself, gleaming in his sacred diadem, decorated

¹⁶ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* 3.157-171 and 3.179-181.

with the *trabea*, resplendent with gems and purple....¹⁷

From this account it is clear that the emperor was accompanied by all the various palatine corps in his service and under the command of the Master of the Offices.¹⁸ Around the emperor marched various units of the *scholae palatinae*, with the *candidati* acting as his immediate guards. No mention is made here of senators around the emperor; evidently they have been entirely displaced by the palace guards. Even in Claudian's account, however, the palatine corps seem to have dominated the emperor's retinue.

To the last, however, the influence of Republican traditions was felt in the *processus consularis*. Thus, the officials in charge of Justin's procession were still the lictors of the Republic. The tendency of imperial ceremonial to glorify the person of the sovereign was more clearly expressed in the development of the triumphal procession.

* * *

The first triumphs had been celebrated by the kings of Rome, and even during the Republic the triumph retained a regal character. Both Caesar and Augustus turned to this institution for suitable forms with which to clothe their authority, and during the Principate the triumphal costume was the regular dress uniform of the emperors.¹⁹ Soon, too, only the emperors celebrated triumphs, even when the actual victory had been won by a general commanding in the emperor's name. A whole system of « victory and triumph symbolism » was developed to glorify the emperor. Then the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.233-243. In both passages the Latin terms used for the various units are given in order to show how vague Corippus is in this respect.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.163: *omnis sacrorum adfuit officiorum*.

¹⁹ Alföldi, "Insignien....," pp. 25-43.

ceremony became associated with the formal entry of the monarch (*adventus Augusti*) and was held on many occasions to demonstrate loyalty to the emperor as well as to celebrate his victories. Thus when Julian approached Sirmium « the people came forth to meet him with torches, flowers and acclamations, saluted him as Emperor and Lord, and so conducted him to the palace; at Antioch he was received as if he were a god. »²⁰ No effort was spared to make the emperor's triumphal entry as impressive and splendid as possible. Dio said of Severus' entry into Rome in 202 that « it was the most splendid spectacle I have ever seen. »²¹ In time triumphs came to be held in connection with consular inaugurations, jubilees, coronations, and even the opening of the circus, so that it was probably the single most characteristic state ceremony of the Later Empire. Hence, the part played in it by the *scholae* is particularly significant.

The first recorded appearance of the *scholae* was in fact in connection with Constantine's great triumphal entry into Rome in 312. No literary account remains, but the Arch of Constantine gives a remarkably detailed pictorial report. The procession was entirely military in character, no senators or civilian dignitaries playing any role. In front of Constantine's richly decorated chariot marched units of the three main components of his army: German and Gallic *cornuti*, Moorish auxiliaries, and Roman regulars. Their officers are distinguished by the *torques*. Around the imperial chariot are his guards, all in the uniform of regulars, some of them on horse and flying the dragon standard. The procession ended at the Forum where Constantine addressed the Senate and people from the rostra, attended by seven guards wearing

²⁰ Ammianus 21.10.1 (Sirmium) and 22.9.14 (Antioch). Cf. Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung...", pp. 93-100; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (Jena, 1938), pp. 168-185.

²¹ Dio 75.1.4; cf. Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung...", p. 90.

the officer's mantle and a few senators.²² Except for the presence of this last group on the rostra, evidently in accordance with traditional protocol, the ceremony was of a purely military nature.²³

This impression is confirmed by the full account Ammianus gives of the triumphal entry of Constantius II into Rome in 357. Constantius, says Ammianus, wished to impress the people with his magnificence and so his procession was remarkable for its size, the banners heavy with gold, and the splendid appearance of his guards. He entered Rome seated on a golden chariot studded with precious stones. A company of soldiers preceded him and another marched on each side of his chariot, and both groups are clearly identified as *scholares*. The first group carried banners bound to spears tipped with gold and gems; the second wore uniforms which « gleamed with glittering light. » As explained above, the use of precious metals and decorated uniforms was restricted to the imperial household. Constantius was surrounded by dragon standards, just like Constantine. Constantius likewise proceeded to the palace. The similarity between the triumphs of Constantine and Constantius is striking.²⁴

Significant details can be added to this picture from Claudian's description of the triumph celebrated by Honorius in 403. This occurred at a time when all Italy was rejoicing at the recent victories won over the Goths at Pollentia and Verona, and it was also the first visit of an emperor to Rome since Constantius II had come about fifty years before. For these reasons Honorius' triumphal entry was a great event and was celebrated with all the traditional pomp.²⁵

Honorius, it seems, was not preceded by any important

²² L'Orange, *Der spätantike...*, pp. 72-89 and plates 12-15.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁴ Ammianus 16.10.4-13; cf. L'Orange, *Der spätantike...*, pp. 87-88.

²⁵ Bury (1), pp. 163-165.

group. We are explicitly told that he « showed his great clemency and courtesy in forbidding the senators of Rome to march before his chariot. »²⁶ It had in fact been part of the ancient tradition of the triumph that the *triumphator* was accompanied by senators and also by his chief officers, aides and relatives.²⁷ By the fourth century this had evidently fallen into disuse, and Honorius' gracious command was probably necessary only because men wished the old ceremonies to be held *prisco more*.²⁸ No mention whatever is made of aides and officers; the only survival from the past was that the generalissimo, Stilicho, rode in the imperial chariot.²⁹

The *scholae* may also have played an important role in another imperial function, the Circus games given by the emperor. Constantius had given games after taking up residence at the palace,³⁰ and so did Honorius. We are told that a thousand of Honorius' troops put on a show of mock battles and complicated drills.³¹ This was known as an *armatura*, and was an old Roman military tradition.³² It seems quite plausible to suppose that the *schola* of *armaturae* were trained for this sort of exercise and that it was they who put on the Circus show.

Thus the character of the fourth-century triumph was very different from what it had been. Whereas formerly it was a religious act involving both the chief dignitaries of the state and all the army, now it became a military ceremony

²⁶ Claudian, *De VI cons. Hon.* 11.550-551.

²⁷ W. Ehlers, "Triumphus no. 1," *PW* 7A (1939), coll. 493-511, esp. coll. 508-509.

²⁸ Claudian, *De cons. Stil.* 3.14.

²⁹ Claudian, *De VI cons. Hon.* 11.578-581.

³⁰ Ammianus 16.10.13-14.

³¹ Claudian, *De VI cons. Hon.* 11.611-639.

³² Vegetius, 2.23; cf. W. Müller, *Claudianus Festgedicht auf das sechste Konsulat des Kaisers Honorius* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 121-123.

designed to glorify the emperor.³³ As elsewhere, the general tendency to centralize power and authority in the person of the sovereign brought with it a corresponding increase in the role of the emperor's staff and particularly his military staff, so that the *scholae palatinae* came to hold a dominant place in the imperial triumph.

One other account of a triumph is noteworthy. We have a brief mention of a ceremonial entry into Constantinople made by Justinian, which seems to have assumed the character of a triumph. The Emperor entered the city at six in the morning, was met by the urban prefect and the Senate, and then went to pray at two churches. Then the group proceeded toward the palace along the Royal Way and was met by the *protectores domestici* and the seven *scholae* with their tribunes and counts. All were dressed in white tunics, and all carried lighted candles. They were posted on either side of the Way, and behind them stood the *agentes in rebus*, the armorers, the staffs of the praetorian and urban prefectures, and all the civilian corporations.³⁴ The form of this ceremony is such that it can hardly be called a triumph in the traditional sense; perhaps it would be better to call it rather a revival of the *adventus Augusti*. In any case, however, the account is very valuable because it gives the most specific description we have of the use of torches during the day as a mark of respect to majesty. This seems to have been part of the imperial ceremonial since the second century, but the evidence for it is vague and

³³ Ehlers, *op. cit.*, coll. 495, 509-510. For a general discussion of the imperial cult and the significance of the psychology of the spectacle, see J. Gagé, "The Psychology of the Imperial Cult," *Diogenes* no. 34 (1961), pp. 44-65.

³⁴ *De cer., App. ad Lib.* 1 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 497, 13-498, 13). Neither date nor exact circumstances (triumph or return from a long absence?) is secure; cf. ed. Reiske, vol. 2, pp. 574-575 *ad loc.*; D. Serruys, "A propos d'un triomphe de Justinien," *Revue des études grecques* 20 (1907), pp. 240-244; Bury (2), p. 215, n. 1; Stein (2), pp. 818-819.

unclear.³⁵ The Arch of Constantine shows two torchbearers present at the scene of Constantine's distribution of money. They are in civilian dress, but it is difficult to judge the significance of their clothing, since the scene is symbolic rather than real.³⁶ Here in the account of Justinian's entry we see that the ritual of lighting the Emperor's way could be entrusted to the *scholares*.

* * *

Of all imperial ceremonies, however, the most important and significant one was undoubtedly the coronation. In this the political traditions and relations of the Empire found expression, and the leading role of the military elements—especially the palace military—is striking.

Even after the « republican mask » had been dropped by Aurelian and his successors the Roman monarchy remained elective. Senate and army each had a share in the election and confirmation of an emperor, and so each had its place in an imperial coronation.³⁷ Nevertheless, the oldest forms and traditions of the coronation were military, and these for long remained dominant.

The first coronation of which we have a full account is that of Julian in 360. When the Emperor Constantius sent an order to Julian to dispatch troops to the East for the Persian wars, the soldiers mutinied and proclaimed Julian Emperor. Their unwillingness to go so far from their homes and also their loyalty to Julian both played a role. The whole affair was managed by the colonels of the army, whom Julian had assiduously cultivated. This was therefore a purely military movement, and the coronation of Julian reflected this. The

³⁵ Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung...", pp. 111-118; Treitinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71.

³⁶ L'Orange, pp. 97, 99 and plates 16, 17, 22b.

³⁷ Bury (1), pp. 5-6.

soldiers gathered before his palace and demanded that he accept their election. Eventually he agreed, and he was then crowned with the military collar (*torques*) of a guard (*scutarius*),³⁸ raised high on a shield, and then acclaimed by all the soldiers.³⁹ Ever since the time of Constantine the purple cloak (*paludamentum*) and the diadem had been the official regalia regularly used by emperors, and the assumption of either counted as a coronation.⁴⁰ Nevertheless the military form of coronation with the *torques* which was used to elevate Julian also probably had an official status, for it continued to be used as part of imperial coronation ceremonies throughout the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries.⁴¹ As Alföldi first pointed out, it is most unlikely that any innovation of the Apostate would have been accepted and continued by his Christian successors. Rather, the *torques* ceremony must be a survival of the third-century military movements. This explains why in Byzantium the ceremony was always carried out on a tribunal in the Field of Mars before a large assembly of soldiers, and always in conjunction with another military ceremony, elevation on a shield.⁴² The other form of coronation, centering on the bestowal of *paludamentum* and diadem—which may be called the civil ceremony—continued to be held, and might or might not be in addition to the military ceremony or even without it. The military ceremony is the one which interests us, for it was here that the palace guards had their ceremonial role in the creation of an emperor.

Jovian and Valentinian were both chosen and crowned

³⁸ The soldier Maurus, who in one place is called *hastatus* in the *Petulantes* (Ammianus 20.4.18), elsewhere an *armiger* "guarding the palace" (Ammianus 31.10.21).

³⁹ Ammianus 20.4.14-18; Zosimus 3.9.

⁴⁰ W. Sickel, "Das byzantinische Kronungsrecht bis zum 10 Jahrhundert," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 7 (1898), pp. 511-557, esp. pp. 513-517.

⁴¹ Treitingner, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-13.

⁴² Alföldi, "Insignien....," pp. 52-55.

by the chief officers of Julian's army after his death. Jovian seems to have had only the civil coronation, for we are told that as soon as he was chosen he was clothed in the imperial robes and presented to the army as it was preparing to march.⁴³ In the case of Valentinian I, on the other hand, both forms of coronation are recorded; first he was raised on a shield and addressed the army, then he was crowned with a diadem by the praetorian prefect.⁴⁴ We also hear that the usurper Firmus was crowned with a *torques* by his army and that he also received the purple.⁴⁵ Sidonius gives a general account of Avitus' coronation which shows the use of both ceremonies concurrently under aristocratic auspices. A council of the notables of Gaul was held at Viernum in 455 and elected Avitus Emperor; two days later he was formally invested before a great assembly of soldiers and dignitaries: « They crowned him with the collar of the camps (*torques castrensis*) and then gave him royal insignia. »⁴⁶

These examples serve to illustrate the persistence of the two forms of coronation side by side. For specific details, however, we must turn to the collection of coronation accounts made by Peter the Patrician and included in the *De ceremoniis*.⁴⁷

The first of these concerns the coronation of Leo I in 457. Marcian had died without having designated any successor, thus leaving the throne open to election. The Senate chose Leo on the nomination of the powerful generalissimo Aspar. Then a great assembly of senators, officials and soldiers was held on the Campus Martius. Leo ascended the tribunal, a

⁴³ Ammianus 25.5.5.

⁴⁴ Philostorgius 8.8 (elevation on shield); Malalas 13 (diadem: ed. Dindorf, p. 337).

⁴⁵ Ammianus 29.5.20 (*torques*); Zosimus 4.16 (purple).

⁴⁶ Sidonius, *Carmina* 7.578-579.

⁴⁷ A. Boak, "Imperial Coronation Ceremonies of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 30 (1919), pp. 37-47.

sergeant-major (*campidoctor*) crowned him with a *torques*, the *labara* were raised to signify recognition of the new commander, and the soldiers acclaimed him: « Leo Augustus, you are the conqueror, you are pious, you are Emperor. » The *candidati* then covered Leo with their shield and he—still on the tribunal—donned the imperial robes and diadem. He then showed himself to the people, and, holding lance and shield, received the homage of the dignitaries in order of rank. He then addressed the soldiers, promised them a donative, received their acclamations, and returned to the capital.⁴⁸ Thus we have here a perfect example of the old military ceremony, essentially the same as the coronation of Julian in 360. It will be noted that the *candidati* were on the tribunal with the Emperor and served as his cover when he donned the imperial robes.

Further significant details are furnished by the account of the coronation of Anastasius in 491. After having been chosen by the Empress Ariadne and accepted by the senators and dignitaries gathered to elect an emperor, he was brought to the palace by the Counts of the Domestics and of the Protectors and kept there until the funeral rites of Zeno were concluded. Then Anastasius went into the imperial box of the Hippodrome, appearing before the soldiers drawn up below. He was then raised on a shield and the sergeant-major of the *lanciararii* crowned him with his own *torques*. Immediately the military standards were raised and the soldiers acclaimed him. Anastasius then entered the palace, where he was crowned with the diadem by the Patriarch.⁴⁹ Thus both ceremonies were

⁴⁸ *De cer.* 1.91 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 410–412). Cf. Bury (1), pp. 314–316; Boak, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38, 45. The remaining part of *De cer.* 1.91 is concerned with ceremonies of the tenth century; cf. Bury (1), p. 316, n. 2.

⁴⁹ *De cer.* 1.92 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 417–423). Cf. Bury (1), pp. 429–432; Boak, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–39.

used here. The *domestici* and the *protectores* were used as agents of order by the Empress Ariadne.

All of this, however, leaves unanswered the important questions: who were the « dignitaries » entitled to elect an emperor? What role did the palace troops play in this state act? Fortunately we have one document of great importance which answers these questions. It is the account of the election and coronation of Justin I.

When Anastasius died in 519 there was again no designated successor, nor was there even an empress to propose a candidate. The ushers (*silentiarii*) sent word of Anastasius' death to Celer, Master of the Offices, and Justin, Count of the Excubitors. These were the two commanders of the palace troops, the excubitors being a company of guards organized in the fifth century and evidently as important as the *scholae palatinae*. The two commanders then called an assembly of their troops, the Master summoning « the *candidati* and other *scholares*, » the Count summoning the whole corps of *excubitores*, and they then announced the death of the Emperor.⁵⁰ Next day the palace guards came to the Hippodrome, and the circus factions were also there. Meanwhile the Senate met in the palace nearby. Celer, acting as chairman, warned the senators that they must agree quickly or else others would choose an emperor for them. Then, while they were deliberating, the *excubitores* and *scholares* came to blows in the Hippodrome over their respective candidates. Finally the senators agreed upon Justin. The imperial robes were sent to him by the chamberlains; he entered the imperial box and was elevated on a

⁵⁰ Since the 2 groups of Celer and Justin are clearly equal, and since the entire group of *excubitores* summoned by Justin numbered only 300, there is a question of just which groups of *scholares* were summoned by Celer. It is clear that all 3,500 *scholares* in the 7 *scholae* could not have been summoned for they would have far outnumbered the *excubitores*, whereas the account of the conflict indicates that they did not.

shield and crowned with a *torques* by the sergeant-major of the *lanciarrii*. Everything then followed as in the coronation of Anastasius.⁵¹

This account casts a great deal of light on the effective forces in the politics of the Later Empire. On the one hand are the high dignitaries of the civil and military administration, essentially the officials who held or had held offices entitling them to the rank of *illustris*.⁵² On the other hand there are the palace guards or, more properly, the elite units of the guards. The people organized in the circus factions were also a factor, but it is clear that they could be manipulated. It has been suggested that the 60,000 troops stationed around Constantinople also played a role, but there is no evidence whatever for this.⁵³ At the death of Anastasius these troops were not summoned, and, what is more significant, their commanders were not consulted. Only the palace guards had effective influence. From the account of Justin's election it appears that the only soldiers involved were the 300 *excubitores* and an approximately equal number of *scholares*, a far cry from 60,000 troops. Similarly the coronation of Justinian as co-Emperor took place before « the *scholares* and other corps » in the Delphas, one of the halls of the palace.⁵⁴ It is impossible to know precisely what this means or how many soldiers were present, but probably only the elite units assigned to the palace were actually involved, not the entire corps of *scholae*. The grand chamberlain Amantius tried to gain the throne for his own candidate through the commander of the *excubitores*, Justin, and the final choice was Justin himself.⁵⁵ Since the

⁵¹ *De cer.* 1.93 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 426-430). Cf. Bury (2), pp. 16-18; Boak, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

⁵² Boak, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵⁴ *De cer.* 1.95 (ed. Reiske, vol. 1, pp. 432-433).

⁵⁵ Malalas 17 (ed. Dindorf, p. 410).

300 *excubitores* played such a leading role they cannot have been greatly outnumbered by the *scholares* present.

* * *

Glorification of the emperor as well as his protection was an important mission of the palace guards. Because the Empire was based on the power and greatness of the sovereign, it was necessary to surround him with an impressive ritual. The emperor was presented to his subjects as unconquerable, omnipotent, more than human. It was a form of nationalism, and hence the important role of the guards in maintaining the illusion. Thus Corippus speaks as follows about the ceremony of raising Justin II on a shield at his coronation: « Four chosen youths raised on high an enormous shield and he stood above his subjects.... The mighty sovereign stood upon the shield and seemed another Sun; a splendid light shone from the capital and men marveled that two suns had risen together on the same day. »⁵⁶ So powerful was the influence of this propaganda that even Christian preachers were strongly influenced and tended to picture heaven as a replica of the imperial court and Christ himself as another emperor.⁵⁷

Furthermore, there was a reality behind the myth. Power was actually centered in the hands of the emperor and the men around him. The officers and elite units of the guard not only enhanced the authority of the sovereign; they also benefitted from the privileges he could bestow. They influenced the election of emperors, and at times they even elected their own candidates, as the career of Justin I so eloquently testifies.

⁵⁶ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* 2.137-139, 148-151; cf. H. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo, 1953), pp. 88-89, 103-113.

⁵⁷ J. Kollwitz, *Oströmische Plastik der Theodosianischen Zeit* (Berlin, 1941), pp. 145-152.

Chapter IX

SCHOLARES AND THE MILITARY ELITE (A.D. 361-540)

During the third century the senatorial class lost its dominant position. Power passed into the hands of the soldiers and their leaders. The great turning point was Gallienus' edict excluding senators from military commands. Thereafter the Empire was ruled by a succession of Illyrian generals who had risen from the ranks. After Probus even the pretense of senatorial prerogative was dropped; as a fourth-century historian summed it up, « henceforth the military class was dominant. »¹

Nevertheless, the civil service continued to be separate from the military and even enjoyed superior prestige for another century. Constantius II « never let the military lift their heads too high. Under him no general had senatorial rank, for as I remember myself they were all merely *perfectissimi*. The governor of a province never officially met a cavalry commander, nor were officers allowed to meddle in civil affairs. All officials, both military and civil, continued to look up to the praetorian prefect as the supreme authority, just as in ancient times. »²

With the accession of Julian, however, the military elite became dominant. This was made clear to all by the harsh measures of the Tribunal of Chalcedon. Ostensibly a court of investigation set up by Julian, it became in fact a means by which

¹ Aurelius Victor, *De Caes.* 37.5; cf. N. Baynes, "The Effect of the Edict of Gallienus," *JRS* 15 (1925), pp. 195-201; A. Alföldi, *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge, Eng., 1939), vol. 12, pp. 198-202.

² Ammianus 21.16.1-2; cf. MacMullen, pp. 72-74.

the military leaders paid off old scores against leading members of the civil service. The tribunal was dominated by a military majority—four generals as opposed to two civilians—and its sessions were held in the midst of troops. All the accused were civilians, and even those who had a claim on Julian's friendship did not escape. Among those executed was the treasurer Ursulus, who had earned the resentment of the military by a bitter remark made when he saw the ruins of Amida: « Behold the courage with which the soldiers defend our cities, and yet the empire is drained of its wealth for their pay. » Julian had been aided by Ursulus at a critical moment in his career, but was unable to save him.³ This marks a second decisive point in the development of military domination.

Two years later Julian died and a new aspect of the situation was revealed. No member of Constantine's house survived nor was there a designated heir, so that the marshals were free to choose whom they wished as emperor. Their choice was significant. Instead of electing a seasoned soldier, another Aurelian or Diocletian, they chose a young officer in the *scholae* whose main recommendation was his connections. This was Jovian, son of the Count of Domestics and son-in-law of the Marshal of Cavalry. Though only thirty-two years of age he was already senior *domesticus*, no doubt because he had been enrolled in the corps while still a child through his father's influence. And in fact we are told that he was elected « for his father's prestige rather than his own. »⁴

After only seven months Jovian died. Again the marshals had to elect an emperor and again they chose a man from the inner circle of the military elite, Valentinian I. His father Gratian had served as *protector domesticus* at the court of

³ Ammianus 20.11.5 (Amida) and 22.3.7 (Chalcedon); cf. Thompson, pp. 73-78.

⁴ Eutropius 10.17.1; cf. O. Seeck, "Jovianus no. 1," *PW* 9 (1916), coll. 2006-2011.

Diocletian in Salona, then held a field command in Illyria and finally rose to the top as a trusted « associate » (*comes*) of Constantine to whom special missions were entrusted.⁵ Both his sons were enrolled in the *domestici* when young through his influence. Valentinian served under his father in Africa, and by 357—at the age of thirty-six—he was tribune of a cavalry regiment in Gaul and a trusted subordinate of Julian. Because of an intrigue he was dismissed by Constantius, but Julian on his accession called him back to his service as tribune of a *schola*. Jovian chose him with two other officers for the delicate task of winning over the Gallic army, and at Jovian's death he was away on another mission.⁶ Everything about his career indicates that Valentinian began with excellent connections in the military elite and from the start moved in court circles. He, too, like Jovian, is said to have been chosen Emperor largely because of his father's prestige.⁷ With the election first of Jovian and then of Valentinian we seem to see the moment at which the military elite takes complete control of the Empire.

This impression is strengthened by what we know of the circumstances surrounding Valentinian's election. Shortly after Jovian's death, a meeting of the Empire's leaders was held at

⁵ CIL III.12900 (Salona); *Epitome* 45.3 (*ascitus in militiam usque ad praefecturae praetorianae potentiam conscendit*). Cf. O. Seeck, "Comites," *PW* 4 (1900), coll. 630-632, for Constantine's use of *comites* with extraordinary authority over both civil and military authorities. Jones (3), p. 16 (n. 61), following Ammianus 30.7.2, prefers to consider Gratian the earliest attested *comes rei militaris*. In any case it is clear that Gratian was one of the trusted generals at court and was entrusted with special missions.

⁶ Symmachus, *Oratio* 1.4.7 (Africa); Ammianus 16.11.5-6 (Gaul); Ammianus 16.11.7 (Constantius); Theodoret, *HE* 3.16 (Julian); Ammianus 25.10.6 and 26.1.5 (Jovian). Cf. A. Nagl, "Valentinianus no. 1," *PW* 7A (1948), coll. 2159-2162. Valentinian's dismissal was very likely connected with his father's pagan sympathies and his role in the revolt of Magnentius. Cf. A. Solari, "Graziano Maior," *Athenaeum* 10 (1932), pp. 160-164.

⁷ *Epitome* 45.3: ... *ob cuius [Gratiani] apud milites commendationem Valentiniano imperium resistenti oggeritur*.

Nicaea. Both civilians and military men were present, but only military candidates were considered. One was rejected because he was « rough and boorish »; officers were now expected to have some polish. Another was rejected because he was « too far away »; i.e., his friends and policies were not known. Valentinian was then chosen by general consent. His candidacy was aided by his father's prestige, his friends among the Panonian generals, and a strong letter of support from Datianus. The latter had served in the corps of notaries under Constantius II and had risen to the very top of the civilian hierarchy. He had been consul and was mentioned in an edict along with the Emperor's father-in-law and a king of Armenia. The support of such a man indicated that Valentinian was acceptable to the civilian as well as the military elements of the new governing class.⁸

Several documents of the time give us a portrait of this class. One of the most revealing is the speech made by Mamertinus when entering on his consulship in 362: « Today men of a new type enjoy the emperor's favor. They are a vulgar lot in the eyes of aristocrats — rather rustic and uncouth, and hostile to flatterers. But they shy away from taking other people's money as if it were the plague, and they value above all else the welfare of the commonwealth and the glory of the emperor. »⁹ Datianus was a good example of this type. His father had been at the bottom of the social scale — a bathhouse attendant—and he had risen in the notaries solely through his knowledge of stenography.¹⁰

Military men had their own particular standards and

⁸ Ammianus 26.1.3-5; Philostorgius, *HE* 8.8; *C. Th.* 11.1.1. Cf. A. Solari, "I partiti nella elezione di Valentiniano," *Rivista di Filologia* N.S. 10 (1932), pp. 75-79.

⁹ *Panegyrici latini* 3.21.2.

¹⁰ O. Seeck, "Datianus," *PW* 4 (1901), coll. 2226-2227; Jones (1), pp. 127-128.

ideals, their claims to excellence and leadership. We get a good idea of this from the speech Valentinian made when he created his son *Augustus* in 367. Valentinian was speaking to the officers and generals of his army and the members of his staff. They were men who did not have much respect for hereditary rule. Their feelings were expressed by Dagalaiphus when the question of choosing a colleague for Valentinian first arose: « If you love your family, you have a brother; if you love the commonwealth, choose the ablest man. »¹¹ Hence Valentinian felt it necessary to justify the choice of his son.

Gratian, he admitted, had « not been trained by a rigid education from the cradle, as we ourselves have, » nor had he yet learned to endure the hardships and labors of warfare.

Nevertheless he has been educated in the liberal arts and in all accomplishments and graces, and although only entering on manhood he has learned to distinguish between the virtuous and the vicious. He will so conduct himself that good men will know that they are appreciated, and he will himself be eager to perform noble deeds. He will never desert the standards and eagles, and will cheerfully bear heat, snow, frost, thirst and sleepless nights. He will never shrink from battle when the necessity arises, nor will he hesitate to expose his life to save comrades in danger.¹²

Military rule was justified, moreover, as rule by the most honest and most active. Symmachus summed this up in a speech delivered before the Emperor in 369. The army which elected Valentinian, he said, was the flower of Roman youth, well qualified for choosing the prince of so great an empire.

¹¹ Ammianus 26.4.1.

¹² Ammianus 27.6.8-9.

Its meeting was a true electoral assembly, a *comitia*, and a worthy successor to the corrupt assemblies of the Republic. Nor could the idle senators retain power. « Men sunk in sloth cannot decide public affairs.... Let those who bear arms choose the man who will be their commander. »¹³ We may be sure that such sentiments did not come readily to so staunch a defender of senatorial prerogatives. Symmachus told his masters what they wanted to hear.

Symmachus, indeed, shows us clearly just how fundamental and explicit was the conflict between the new elite and the old. No mention whatever is made of the Senate's claim to confer legitimacy. Quite the contrary. Valentinian is elected by « the senate of the camp » (*castrensis senatus*); the senators are dismissed contemptuously as « idle persons » (*otiosi*). This was a sharp change from earlier traditions, extending down to Julian. That ruler, for example, had been careful to show respect for the Senate and its privileges. He took part often in the deliberations of the Senate at Constantinople, in 362 even accompanied on foot the consuls when they entered the Senate house for the first time, and in fact conferred new privileges on the senatorial order. His attitude is clear in an edict granting senators immunity from imprisonment during judicial investigations. The edict begins with these words: « The rights of senators and the authority of the senatorial order, to which We Ourselves belong, must be defended from all abuses. »¹⁴

Under Valentinian the senatorial order was treated very differently. The edict of Julian from which we have quoted was repealed in 365. A new office was created to defend plebeians from the great landowners, which meant senators primarily. Of the eight consulates conferred on subjects six went

¹³ Symmachus, *Oratio* 1.9; cf. A. Alföldi, *A Conflict of Ideas in the Late Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 103-106.

¹⁴ *C. Th.* 9.2.1 (362); cf. pp. 122-125 of W. Ensslin, "Kaiser Julians Gesetzgebungswerk und Reichsverwaltung," *Klio* 18 (1932), pp. 104-199.

to military men, only two to senators. And most striking of all, Valentinian's urban prefect conducted a series of spectacular trials which led to the execution of a number of prominent senators and terrorized the entire order.¹⁵

These facts make clear the significance of Ammianus' considered judgment on Valentinian's rule: « he was the first of all our rulers who raised the soldiers to a dominant position in the state and increased their rank and wealth, to the great injury of the commonwealth. »¹⁶ The record of the law codes shows that under Valentinian military personnel were in fact raised in rank so as to become easily the equal of the old elite in official prestige. An edict of 365, for example, confers equestrian rank on the finance officers of field army regiments who had served ten years, and promises yet higher rank for further service, this at a time when the governors of most provinces enjoyed only equestrian rank. Marshals were made equal in rank with the praetorian and urban prefects in 372, and as early as 369 a general is attested with senatorial rank. All generals were granted senatorial rank by 386, although some governors were still equestrians as late as the reign of Theodosius I. As a result a great number of military men entered the Senate, so many indeed that it was necessary to issue an edict in 382 ordering all senators to wear civilian attire at Senate meetings rather than their army uniforms.¹⁷

Valentinian's policies led to an enormous increase in the size of the senatorial order. An idea of this growth is given by the change in the Senate at Constantinople, which numbered

¹⁵ *C. Th.* 9.2.2 (365: repeal); *C. Th.* 1.29.1-5 (368-373: defenders of the plebeians); Ammianus 28.1 (trials in Rome). Cf. Alföldi, *A Conflict...*, pp. 48-81; Jones (1), p. 142.

¹⁶ Ammianus 27.9.4.

¹⁷ *C. Th.* 8.1.10 (365: finance officers); *C. Th.* 6.7.1 (372) and Ammianus 21.16.2 (marshals); *C. Th.* 12.1.113 (386: generals); *C. Th.* 14.10.1 (382: dress). Cf. O. Hirschfeld, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 659-668.

less than 300 at the end of Constantius II's reign and had risen to 2,000 by 385.¹⁸ A great part of this increase, probably the larger part, was due to the wholesale inclusion of military men. Now there was a new military elite, set apart by the possession of the hereditary senatorial title (*clarissimus*), and like the older senatorial class anxious to secure privileged positions in the state service for its sons. And the most prized privilege was a commission in the *scholae*.

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Valentinian, Valens, Jovian and St. Martin are four examples of men who entered the *scholae* when young through the influence of their fathers and soon rose to field commands. Beginning as officers in the *scholae*, i.e., as *protectores domestici*, they very soon acquired seniority, and this, with their connections at court, gave them a tremendous advantage in gaining promotion. In this way the officers corps became more and more the preserve of *virī commendabiles*, sons of the military elite. And the core of this system was the *scholae*. In 358 Libanius mentioned that a number of boys from good families were being enrolled as soldiers of the Emperor by the Master of the Offices.¹⁹

Soon after his accession Valentinian issued an edict which established the privileges of *commendabiles* on a firm legal basis. This law is so revealing that it deserves to be quoted in full.

Although the sons and close relatives of *domestici* may be small and below the age of puberty, We attach them to the companies of *domestici*, and these youths shall not only be enrolled on the official

¹⁸ Themistius, *Oratio* 34.13; cf. Jones (1), pp. 142-144, and (2), pp. 526-529.

¹⁹ Libanius, *Ep.* 362 (ed. Foerster, vol. 10, pp. 345-346). Cf. Seeck (5), p. 413.

registers but they shall also be enriched by payment of subsistence allowances. For even though it should be established that such youths are not yet suitable for bearing arms and for combat service, We command that each of them shall obtain four subsistence allowances....²⁰

The effect of Valentinian's edict was to give the sons of *domestici* legal claim to a commission in the corps. They were enrolled as *ad crescentes*, a term taken from inheritance law: a clear indication of the way a commission came to be regarded.²¹ Army service had tended to be hereditary since Diocletian, but it is only in the latter half of the fourth century that a hereditary officers corps emerges.

Furthermore, Valentinian made enrollment in the *domestici* doubly desirable by giving *ad crescentes* in that corps quadruple pay. *Ad crescentes* in regular army units received no pay, but were to be supported by their parents until they actually reported for active duty.²² As can be readily understood, this distinction made competition for places in the *domestici* intense, and by the end of the century only men with the best connections at court succeeded in getting their sons admitted. St. Martin, the son of a tribune, and Ammianus, a mere *curialis*, had been able to enter the *domestici* before 360, but by the end of the century we find Aetius, son of a general, attached to the staff of the praetorian prefecture.²³ Since he was clearly destined for a military career, his father would presumably have

²⁰ C. Th. 6.24.2 (365); translation based on that of C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code* (Princeton, 1952), p. 135.

²¹ O. Seeck, "Ad crescentis no. 2," *PW* 1 (1894), col. 349.

²² C. Th. 7.1.11 (384). This does not apply to the *domestici* for it is addressed to a marshal.

²³ Greg. Tur., *Hist. Fr.* 2.8; a *puero praetorianus*. Cf. E. Stein, *Untersuchungen über das Officium der Prätorianerpräfektur*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam, 1962), p. 5.

wished to enroll him in the *domestici*. The superior standing of service in the *domestici* is explicit in two inscriptions which state that Stilicho's career began « with service while still a youth in the most distinguished corps »; the corps referred to is generally taken to be the *protectores domestici*.²⁴

However, not all places in the *domestici* were filled with *commendabiles*. It was still possible for soldiers to rise from the ranks and be rewarded with a commission in the *domestici*. Valentinian evidently wished this to continue, since he made a clear distinction between *domestici* appointed « after years of toil » and those « admitted by patronage or by the favor of powerful persons, » and specified that the former should pay a much lower entrance fee.²⁵ However, *adcrecentes* began accumulating seniority as soon as they were enrolled, and so they had a great advantage over older veterans.²⁶ Furthermore, if graft was as common in the *domestici* as in the rest of the army, this would have been another factor favoring the promotion of officers' sons, who would have had more money than veterans from the ranks.²⁷

Inscriptions confirm the evidence of the edicts and indicate how the prestige of the *scholae* increased. A boy of six years is recorded in Thrace who died as an enrolled member of the second *schola scutariorum*.²⁸ By his time, probably in the early fifth century, there were evidently not enough officers' posts for *commendabiles*, and so places in the ranks were given instead. An inscription from Rome dated 453 records a *protector domesticus* who died at the age of sixty-five; perhaps he was a veteran promoted to the corps after years of service, or, less likely, perhaps he had been appointed young and had simply

²⁴ CIL VI.1730 and 1731.

²⁵ C. Th. 6.24.3 (365).

²⁶ C. Th. 7.1.14 (394).

²⁷ Jones (2), p. 633.

²⁸ CIL III.14207, 9.

stayed on. In any case it shows that the *domestici* were by no means all young men.²⁹ A *protector domesticus* in Milan who died at fifty was commemorated by his freedman, indicating a certain degree of wealth.³⁰ In this connection it is significant that we are told of St. Martin that he had only one slave while in the *domestici*; it is clearly implied that most *domestici* had more. Imperial donatives were fairly frequent and generous, and an officer's income must have been fairly high.³¹ And on retirement there was a further reward: a *domesticus* from Trier is recorded who retired *ex tribunis*, i.e., with the honorary rank of tribune, and, therefore, with senatorial rank and privileges.³²

So great was the prestige of the title *protector* that it was conferred on client princes. A Celtic person in Cambria, Wales, was commemorated with the simple inscription *Memoria Vorteporigis Protictoris*, and he has been tentatively identified with the King Vorteporius mentioned by Gildo.³³ A more tantalizing inscription is from Trier and honors the memory of Hariulfus, *protector domesticus* and son of a prince of the Burgundians. Hariulfus died at the age of twenty, and it is difficult to judge whether he actually served in the corps—as seems likely from the inscription being found in Trier, where there was a court in residence for many years—or else received the title as a mark of friendship.³⁴ In either case it shows the prestige of the title.

Although most of our information concerns the officers of the *scholae*, it seems clear that the enlisted men would have shared in their privileged position. And when the emperors

²⁹ *AE* 1889, no. 58. The term used is actually *protector dominicus*, *dominicus* meaning imperial as in *C. J.* 3.26.7: *dominici coloni*.

³⁰ *CIL* V.6226.

³¹ Sulpicius Severus, *vita Martini* 2.5; cf. C. Jullian, "La jeunesse de Saint Martin," *REA* 12 (1910), pp. 260-280, especially pp. 267-270.

³² *CIL* XIII.3681. *C. Th.* 7.20.5 (328) shows the older practice of retiring veterans with the honorary rank of *protector*; cf. Jones (2), p. 637.

³³ *Ephemeris Epigraphica* 9 (1913), p. 532, no. 1030.

³⁴ *CIL* XIII.3682.

ceased to take the field after 395, the need for keeping the guards in fighting trim was much reduced and the whole corps tended to become the preserve of *commendabiles*. The most striking evidence for this change is the fact that early in the fifth century the members of one or more *scholae* were promoted *en masse* to the rank of *protector*. An edict of 414 indicates that this had already taken place in the West, for it declares that the eleven senior members of the *protectores* and of the *domestici* should henceforth enjoy senatorial rank. Previously there had been no difference in meaning between *protector domesticus*, *domesticus*, or *protector* as applied to officers on the emperor's staff. Ammianus, for example, uses each of these terms to describe Jovianus' rank before he was elected Emperor.³⁵ The edict of 414, however, indicates that a change had taken place, for it shows that by then there were two separate corps, one of *protectores* and one of *domestici*. Each had its own official roll (*matricula*), chief officer (*primicerius*), and ten seniors (*decemprimi*). These eleven ranking officers in each corps were by the edict of 414 granted senatorial rank. This edict was issued in Ravenna by the Western Emperor; two years later, for reasons at which we can only guess, two edicts were issued in Constantinople with essentially the same provisions, except that now exemption from senatorial burdens was also granted.³⁶ This promotion to senatorial rank was by no means a sign of extraordinary favor, for during this period the senior members of all the palatine services were gaining senatorial rank. Senior members of the *agentes in rebus* were made senators in 386, and senior clerks of the *scrinia* in 410, and indeed as early as 381 all members of the corps of notaries

³⁵ Ammianus 21.16.20 (*tum protector domesticus*); 25.5.4 (*domesticorum ordinis primus*); 25.5.8 (*Iovianum adhuc protectorem adscitum*). Cf. Babut (1), p. 227.

³⁶ *C. Th.* 6.24.7 (Ravenna, 414); 6.24.8 (Constantinople, 416: concerning *domestici*); 6.24.9 (Constantinople, 416: concerning *protectores*).

were so honored.³⁷ Senior *palatini* were awarded senatorial rank in 408 but renounced it in 428 because of the heavy financial burdens involved.³⁸ Exemption from senatorial obligations was therefore an important privilege, and was granted to *agentes in rebus* besides the *protectores* and *domestici*.³⁹ Senatorial rank was also granted during this period to certain officers in field units above the rank of *ducenarius*.⁴⁰ It seems, therefore, that the bestowal of senatorial rank on senior officers in the *scholae* was part of a larger pattern and was by no means unusual.

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One aspect of the edicts of 414 and 416 was, however, very much out of the ordinary, as can be seen when we examine a problem raised by the edicts: who were the new *protectores* who now became quite separate from the *protectores domestici*? Previously there had been *protectores* serving on the staffs of the marshals, as opposed to the *protectores domestici* serving at court on the staff of the emperor. But one of the new edicts makes it quite clear that the new *protectores* also served at court:

We do not allow the most devoted members of the *protectores* to be without glory, for they undertake armed imperial service and bear the responsibility not only of defending their own corps but also of protecting Our person, because of which they have

³⁷ C. Th. 6.27.5 (386: *agentes in rebus*); 6.26.16 (410: *scriniarii*); 6.10.2 (381: *notarii*); cf. Jones (2), pp. 547-548.

³⁸ C. Th. 6.30.19 (408); 6.2.26 (428: "The palatines shall be exempt... since they asked our Clemency for the right to renounce the senatorial dignity").

³⁹ C. Th. 6.27.6 (390: *agentes*).

⁴⁰ Grosse, pp. 119-120.

received the title *protectores*. Just as We did recently in the case of the most devoted *protectores domestici*, so now to the *protectores* We grant....⁴¹

Furthermore, it is clear that the new *protectores* were closely connected with the *domestici*. The two groups are treated together in the law codes under the title *De domesticis et protectoribus*, the order of the words indicating that the *domestici* were of higher rank.⁴² They were both under the authority of the *comes domesticorum*, for it was this officer who granted them leave and kept their *matriculae*.⁴³ On the other hand, both groups were quite apart from the *scholares*, who are treated separately by a law of 441 and receive their own section in the Code of Justinian.⁴⁴ The problem remains: who were the new *protectores*?

The solution lies in a brief statement by John Lydus. In the course of a rather fanciful discussion of the origins of Roman military organization he gives a list of the various service branches in his day (« the so-called *capita* »), and among these is the following: « members of the first corps of *scutarii*—shield-bearers who are now called *protectores*. »⁴⁵ The new *protectores* were created, therefore, by a wholesale promotion of the first *schola* of *scutarii*.

There still remains the problem of fitting these new *protectores* into the structure described by the *Notitia Dignitatum*, since that document makes no mention of *protectores* at court. It does, however, mention two units of *domestici*, one of cavalry and the other of foot. Mommsen and Jullian suggested that the

⁴¹ C. Th. 6.24.9 (416); translation based on Pharr, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁴² C. Th. 6.24 and C. J. 12.7.

⁴³ C. J. 12.17.3 and 4 (concerning penalties for absence without leave).

⁴⁴ Nov. Th. 21 (441): *De scholaribus et comitibus scholarum et de domesticis eorum*; C. J. 12.29: *De privilegiis scholarum*.

⁴⁵ Joh. Lydus, *De mag.* 1.46 (ed. Wunsch, p. 48).

new *protectores* of the Code became the foot *domestici* of the *Notitia*. As Babut has pointed out, however, this implies a change in title between 416 and the compilation of the *Notitia* around 425. Furthermore, the *protectores* are attested as late as the tenth century by passages in *De ceremoniis*, as will be discussed below. Babut suggested instead that the new *protectores* were the officers of the *scholares*, and equates them with the senior officers of the *scholae* (*decemprimi scholarum*) who were given senatorial rank by an edict in 427.⁴⁶

Babut's explanation is itself open to serious objections, however. First, the edict of 427 was addressed to the praetorian prefect of the East, but by the two edicts of 416 discussed above (*C. Th.* 6.24.8 and 9) the Eastern authorities had already conferred senatorial status on senior *protectores* and *domestici*; it would seem more likely, therefore, that the edict of 427 concerned a third group, and that the *decemprimi scholarum* were not *protectores*.

Moreover, there is good evidence that a separate corps of *protectores* existed at court. Corippus, in describing the procession of Justin II discussed in an earlier chapter, says of the Emperor's retinue: « Then come the cohorts in close array, led by a lictor. An armed band guards the person of the emperor on his right and left. A numerous company of guards protect the emperor with their shields, and the units of *protectores*

⁴⁶ *C. Th.* 6.24.10 (427). Cf. Babut (1), pp. 226-234. Stein (1), p. 428, n. 192, denies that there was any change during the fourth century, but I believe that this is because he has misunderstood Babut's argument. When Stein says that "the exact observation of Babut which has led him to this error" is his distinction between *protectores* serving at army headquarters as opposed to *protectores domestici* serving at court (cf. Stein [1], p. 545, n. 106), he ignores the main point, which is that the *protectores* of *C. Th.* 6.24.7 and 9 and of the passages in Corippus and Procopius discussed below are *protectores* serving at court and are quite distinct from the *domestici* of *C. Th.* 6.24.8. These *protectores* are therefore "new" *protectores*. This is not to deny that the status of the "new" *protectores* arose out of the "old" ones, but the fact that the new ones served at court in their own corps marks a new development.

shine with the ruddy gold of their gleaming spears. »⁴⁷ From the sixth century, too, we have the evidence of Procopius, who says that besides the *scholares* « there are also others in the palace held in much higher esteem, for the Treasury is accustomed to allow them a higher wage... these are called *domestici* and *protectores*. »⁴⁸

Finally, Babut's theory depends in part on his contention that during the fourth century centurions were replaced by *protectores*.⁴⁹ But this flies in the face of the evidence. Vegetius, for example, states quite flatly: « There were also *centuriones*, who each led a *centuria*, and these are now called *centenarii*. » And just a little earlier he says of the superior group of centurions, « likewise the *primus hastatus* led two *centuriae*, that is, 200 men, in the second line, and he is now called *ducenarius*. »⁵⁰ Similarly, St. Jerome in the crucial passage discussed earlier gives a full list of ranks from tribune down to recruit, and does not include any mention of *protector*.⁵¹

The most revealing evidence on the nature of the protectorate, however, comes from our information on Abinnaeus, a professional soldier of the mid-fourth century. He enlisted in the army ca. 304, and by 337 he had risen to the rank

⁴⁷ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* 4.238-242:

incedunt densae mixto lictore cohortes:
hinc armata manus dextram laevamque tuetur
Caesarei lateris; clipeis pia terga tegebat
ingens excubitus, protectorumque phalanges
fulgebant rutilo pilis splendentibus auro.

⁴⁸ Procopius, *HA* 24.24.

⁴⁹ Babut (1), pp. 228-229, followed on all important points by Stein (1), pp. 57-58. Stein's criticisms of Babut (vol. 1, pp. 426-427, n. 186) were later withdrawn (vol. 2, p. 429, n. 1).

⁵⁰ Vegetius 2.8.

⁵¹ Hieronymus, *contra Iohannem Hierosol.* 19 (Migne, vol. 23, coll. 386-387). Cf. Grosse, pp. 107-127, and Jones (2), pp. 632-634, both of whom make no effort to fit the rank of *protector* into the regular army hierarchy.

of *ducenarius*. In that year he was chosen by his commander for the task of escorting an embassy of Blemyes from Egypt to Constantinople, and when Abinnaeus reached the capital with his charges he was rewarded with the title of *protector*. Abinnaeus was at the same time released from his unit and assigned to imperial headquarters; in other words, he began a new career outside the regular hierarchy of the field army. His first task was to escort the Blemyes back to Egypt, then he accompanied recruits from the Thebaid to Hierapolis, and then he was seconded to the command of an *ala* in Egypt with the rank of prefect. All of this supports the contention that « the *protectores* formed a pool of potential officers » who were used for special assignments and were eligible for promotion. As prefect of an *ala* Abinnaeus was concerned with « surveillance, police duties, and administration. » Abinnaeus the *protector* was not a centurion, but rather a junior staff officer at the disposal of headquarters who was used for special assignments and was finally given a position of administrative responsibility.⁵²

For the various reasons discussed above, therefore, it seems best to look for a new explanation of the origin and purpose of the new *protectores*. The starting point for this explanation should be the identification of the new *protectores* with the old first *schola* of *scutarii*. Why was one *schola* singled out for promotion *en masse* to staff officer's rank? Very likely, it may be suggested, because it was the *schola* chosen to serve at court. As has been explained in the previous chapter, it is certain that a great many *scholares* were regularly away from the capital on assigned duties as *deputati*, and also it seems very likely that only a relatively small number of *scholares*—perhaps as few as 300—were regularly on duty at the palace. Such a small group would certainly have occupied a

⁵² P. Lond. 447 recto. Cf. H. Bell et al., *The Abinnaeus Archive* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 6-21 and 34-37; quotes from pp. 11 and 13.

privileged position within the corps, and their proximity to the emperor would have given them every opportunity to share in the general promotions accorded the palatine services in the period 390-420.

Furthermore, this identification would fit in with what is known of Byzantine institutions. It has long been recognized that the accounts of imperial ceremonies and processions in *De ceremoniis* raise a problem regarding the *protectores*; they are mentioned in the ceremonies, but there is no mention of their quarters in the descriptions of imperial processions. On the other hand, there is the difficult problem of explaining what corps used a chamber in the Chalce—that part of the palace where the guards were quartered—called the First Schola. This was a large octagonal room with a vault, situated at the entrance to the Church of the Lord. Baynes suggested it was used by the first *schola* of the *candidati*, but the *candidati* were attached to the sixth and seventh *scholae*, not the first. The whole area reserved for the guards was called the *scholae* and seems to have preserved the ancient traditions, so it is unlikely that the *candidati* would have been numbered anew.⁵³

To conclude, then: the new *protectores* who appear after 400 are members of a new corps on duty at the palace. Probably their status arose out of that of the old *protectores*, those assigned to the headquarters of marshals, and they may have had some special connection with that type of duty, but there is no evidence to substantiate such speculations.

This identification of the new *protectores* raises a question regarding the *scholares*: who were their officers, and in particular who were the *decemprimi scholarum* who in 427 (C. Th. 6.24.10) received senatorial status? The answer seems

⁵³ *De cer.* 1.1 (ed. Vogt, p. 8). Cf. A. Vogt, *Le Livre des ceremonies: Commentaire*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1935), pp. 47-48; and N. Baynes, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 30 (1910), pp. 366-368 (review of J. Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais de Constantinople*).

to be that they were *scholares* proper, men who had come up from the ranks in the *scutarii*, *gentiles* or *armaturae*.

Several edicts indicate that by the end of the fourth century the status of *scholares* had greatly increased. An edict of 381 states that the « senior members of the corps »—no more specific translation is possible—shall be sent to the provinces to oversee the public post, and orders that they be provided with two posthorses each.⁵⁴ By 409 the tribunes of the *scholae* have been raised to the rank of count and enjoy the privileges accorded the highest levels of officials.⁵⁵ Finally, most important of all, an edict of 414 refers to « those *scholares* to whom, in consideration of their years of service, We have given command of field units. »⁵⁶ Consequently it is not at all impossible that *scholares* should have gained the right to promotion up from the ranks. This possibility becomes a probability in the light of an edict of 441 regulating the privileges of *scholares*, counts of *scholares*, and the counts' confidential advisers (*domestici*). It denies counts the right to punish or degrade their *senatores* and *ducenarii*, and forbids them on pain of a heavy fine from choosing their *domestici* from their *senatores*, *ducenarii* or *centenarii*. Instead counts are ordered to choose their *domestici* from a group designated in a previous edict, which unfortunately is not extant. Should a count choose his *domesticus* from the forbidden categories—i.e., the senior NCO's in his command—he would be fined, as would the appointee if he accepted, and a fine would also be levied on the bureau of barbarians if it had permitted such an abuse.⁵⁷ The edict seems to indicate that the count of a *schola* and his *domesticus* were appointed from outside the

⁵⁴ C. Th. 6.29.6 (381).

⁵⁵ C. Th. 11.18.1 (409).

⁵⁶ C. Th. 7.4.34 (414).

⁵⁷ C. Th. 21.2 (441). "Bureau of barbarians" depends on the reading *scrinium barbarorum*, which is found in the equivalent section of the Code of Justinian (12.29.1) and is accepted by Pharr, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

schola, while all the other officers in it were promoted from within. The mention of the bureau of barbarians indicates that the *scholares* were now entirely foreign in origin and had their own special place in the imperial system. The *protectores* and *domestici* would then have represented the Roman, or at least Romanized, elements.

* * *

In general, the developments discussed above all reflect the gradual increase in authority and privilege enjoyed by the military elite. As the armed forces of the Empire became more and more foreign, mercenary, and professional in character, the military elite tended to consolidate and extend its position. This was particularly true of the officers serving at court. A few examples will illustrate their privileged role.

Ammianus charges Valentinian with favoring the military to the injury of the commonwealth, and to support this charge he tells the story of Romanus. This soldier served as *comes Africae* under Valentinian and was accused by the citizens of Leptis of having refused to defend them against an invasion of Asturiani. Valentinian sent a commission of investigation to discover the truth of these charges, but Romanus was able to escape punishment partly through a judicious use of bribery, partly through the influence of his relative Remigius, Master of the Offices, and partly through his friendship with the great marshal Merobaudes.⁵⁸ However, a few years later a revolt broke out in his province and led to his downfall. Theodosius the Elder arrived in 373 with an army and soon after ordered the arrest of Romanus and his deputy Vincentius, holding them responsible for the revolt because of their oppressions. However, Vincentius escaped and later was pardoned; Romanus' fate is not mentioned by Ammianus, and

⁵⁸ Ammianus 27.9.1-4 and 28.6. Cf. B. H. Warmington, "The Career of Romanus, Comes Africae," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 49 (1956), pp. 55-64.

considering Ammianus' dislike for him this must mean that he, too, escaped punishment. Once again his powerful friends at Valentinian's court saved him.⁵⁹ The explanation of Romanus' good fortune lies in his career. The count of Africa and his deputy are almost certainly the Romanus and Vincentius who commanded the first and second *scholae* of *scutarii* under Julian and who were banished by that Emperor for complicity in a plot.⁶⁰ Valentinian had been tribune of the second *schola* of *scutarii* under Jovian, and very likely was the successor of Vincentius. He must have known both Romanus and Vincentius well, and this would explain their return to service, their promotion to high office, and their success in escaping punishment. With their careers in mind we can better understand Ammianus' bitter remark about Valentinian: « He was very strict in punishing common soldiers for faults, but he was all mildness when officers were concerned. »⁶¹

Another example of conditions under the Later Empire is the career of Stilicho, the general whom Theodosius left in supreme command of imperial forces at his death and to whom he entrusted the guardianship of the Western Empire. Stilicho was the son of a Vandal prince who had commanded a German cavalry unit under Valens; he is called *semibarbarus* by Jerome, however, and so it has been presumed that he was half Roman. He was born ca. 365, was enrolled in the *domestici* when very young, and in 383, at the age of eighteen, he was sent to Persia on the staff of the ambassador Sporacios. At the Persian court he took part in the aristocracy's hunting parties and impressed all with his prowess in archery and swordsmanship.⁶² On his return he married a member of the

⁵⁹ Ammianus 29.5.

⁶⁰ Ammianus 22.11.2. Cf. Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 63, and W. Ensslin, "Kaiser Julians...", *Klio* 18 (1922), p. 158.

⁶¹ Ammianus 30.5.3. Cf. Thompson, p. 105.

⁶² Claudian, *De cons. Stil.* 1.64-68.

imperial house, was made *tribunus stabuli* and then *comes stabuli*, Count of Domestics, and by 393 he was marshal. He reached the top, therefore, before he was thirty.⁶³ Theodosius made him his trusted aide, so that even when still Count of Domestics Stilicho gave orders to marshals. An official inscription commemorates him as « the companion of the sainted emperor Theodosius in all his wars and victories, and by him admitted into the royal house. »⁶⁴ Everything about Stilicho's birth, career and style marks him as a member of an aristocratic elite. A modern scholar has aptly summed this up: « His youth had been that of a noble of the court, his marriage that of a Roman aristocrat, and in his military career he showed himself a proud Roman. »⁶⁵

As a third example of the military elite let us consider the career of Aetius. Like Stilicho he was *semibarbarus*, his mother being an Italian of noble and wealthy family while his father Gaudentius was of barbarian origin. Gaudentius had begun service in the *domestici*, however, and had risen to Marshal of Cavalry. Aetius when a boy was enrolled in the staff of the palace. His family's prominence was such that in 405 Alaric asked that he and the son of another general be handed over as hostages, an interesting index as to whom he thought to be of most importance.⁶⁶ Aetius spent three years

⁶³ O. Seeck, "Stilicho," *PW* 3A (1929), coll. 2523-2524; E. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire Romain* (Paris, 1951), pp. 129-142.

⁶⁴ *CIL* VI.1730.

⁶⁵ Demougeot, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁶⁶ Zosimus 5.36. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* 2.8, says Aetius was a *puero praetorianus*. O. Seeck, "Aetius no. 4," *PW* 1 (1894), col. 701 took this to mean he was attached to the *officium* of the praetorian prefect; Babut (2), p. 261, thought Aetius was given the position of *tribunus et notarius*. The statement given here follows Stein (2), pp. 796-798, who has shown the connection of the term *praetorianus* with the *comes sacri stabuli* and in addition showed the close connection of this office with that of the *cura palatii*. Both these officers were regarded as part of the emperor's personal establishment, and it was probably on the *matri-cula* of their service (or services) that Aetius' name was entered.

with Alaric and several more years with the Huns, and as a result established permanent contacts with these peoples. On his return he married the daughter of Carpilio, Count of Domestics, and under the usurper John became *cura palatii*. He was sent to recruit a Hun force for John's army, and though John himself was meanwhile defeated and executed Aetius was able to use his Hun troops to win pardon from the government of Valentinian III, and in fact was given the title of count and sent to Gaul to fight the Visigoths. By 429 he was generalissimo and thereafter dominated the Empire with the support of the aristocracy until his assassination in 454.⁶⁷ The description of Aetius given by Gregory of Tours presents him as a perfect gentleman: virile, handsome, cheerful and active, a good horseman and skilled in archery, skillful in war but also outstanding in the arts of peace, neither grasping nor malicious, unafraid in battle and untroubled by hunger, thirst, or lack of sleep.⁶⁸ Whether this is true or not hardly matters; what stands forth is the picture of a man born to rule. In this, as in his family and career, Aetius seems a real aristocrat.

A more concrete factor in his power was his private army of retainers (*bucellarii*). The rise of private armies in the fifth century was a symptom of the power of the military elite and the general decline of the state. They differed in rank, being divided into *amici* and *armigeri*, probably corresponding to the δορυφόροι and ὑπασπισται in the East.⁶⁹ We have very little data about the *bucellarii* until the sixth century, but it is clear that they were bound by strong ties of loyalty to their patrons and on occasion were used for special missions very much as *domestici* were used by the emperors. Thus Stilicho

⁶⁷ Stein (1), pp. 283-284, 347-348.

⁶⁸ Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* 2.8.

⁶⁹ Prosper, *Chron. ad ann.* 455: *ut interfector Aetii amicos armigerosque eius sibi consociaret.* Cf. C. Leclercq, "Les soldats privés au Bas Empire," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 10 (1890), pp. 267-283.

had his men assassinate Mascazel, an allied African prince who had recently been of great service to the Romans.⁷⁰ The role played by the *bucellarii* is indicative of the decline of the Roman state. Aetius' *bucellarii* could not prevent his assassination but they were able to avenge him by killing his assassin, the Emperor Valentinian III. It is noteworthy that they were able to do this because they had been assigned to Valentinian's escort; evidently Aetius had even controlled the Emperor's immediate entourage and had surrounded him with his own men.⁷¹

As a fourth and final example of the military elite we may take Majorian, the last emperor of any importance in the West. His family was quite distinguished in the military service, his grandfather having held the post of Marshal in Illyricum under Theodosius I while his father was for many years Chief of Staff to Aetius.⁷² Majorian himself entered the army early, and seems to have served with Ricimer in the same corps for they are said to have been friends since youth.⁷³ We might expect that Majorian's connections gained him a commission in the *domestici*, and the fact that Ricimer was a prince of the Suevian royal house makes it almost certain that

⁷⁰ Zosimus 5.11; cf. Grosse, pp. 284-285.

⁷¹ John of Antioch, frg. 201.4-5; cf. Stein (1), p. 349. Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* 2.8, identifies one of Valentinian's assassins as *Occilla bucellarius Aetii*; John of Antioch, frg. 201.5, refers to him (under the slightly different name of Optila) along with his "followers." He was evidently an officer in Valentinian's guard, perhaps its commander, and this would explain how he was close enough to the Emperor to kill him and — even more significant — to do this with impunity.

⁷² Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.109-125; cf. W. Ensslin, "Maorianus nos. 1-2," *PW* 14 (1930), coll. 584-590. Ensslin says that Majorian's father served as *domesticus* of Aetius, while Stein (1), p. 597, n. 50, terms his post "*préfet du prétoire extraordinaire accompagnant un comte en campagne*." At any rate he was a person of importance and was even offered the consulship if he would leave the service of Aetius: Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.119-121.

⁷³ Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.266-267; cf. O. Seeck, "Ricimer," *PW* 1A (1914), coll. 797-799.

this was the corps in which he and Majorian served.⁷⁴ In any case Majorian quickly rose to high rank and was sent to defend Tours with a force under his command sometime during 446-448, when he was twenty years of age at most. Soon after he served on Aetius' staff in a war against the Franks and distinguished himself in battle.⁷⁵ Then, however, Majorian's career received a sudden check. He was dismissed by Aetius and forced to retire to his estates. This occurred before 451, for Majorian's panegyrist makes no mention of the Battle of Chalons, and this would indicate Majorian played no part in that great victory. It has been convincingly argued that Majorian was dismissed because Aetius' enemies at court were planning to marry the Emperor's daughter to Majorian rather than to Aetius' son Gaudentius, which would have been a blow to Aetius' cherished ambition of seeing his son ascend the imperial throne.⁷⁶ Majorian was therefore judged worthy of entering the imperial house and even ascending the throne himself, as other soldiers such as Constantius III and Marcian had recently done after marrying princesses. Majorian was then still a young man in his twenties and the honor would have come to him mainly because of his family's prestige, a striking example of the high position enjoyed by members of the military elite.

A few years after Majorian's dismissal the Emperor Valentinian III killed Aetius. He then recalled Majorian to duty

⁷⁴ Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.198-230; cf. Stein (1), p. 581, n. 67, on Majorian's campaigns, and p. 597, n. 51, on his birth in 428. Stein's notes correct the dates given by W. Ensslin, "Maorianus no. 1," *PW* 14 (1930), coll. 584-585.

⁷⁵ Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.210-211 (defense of Tours), 211-213 (war against Franks), 213-255 (bravery in combat). The relative emphasis given to what was really only a minor skirmish (Stein [1], p. 581, n. 67) indicates the importance of soldierly virtues in Majorian's career.

⁷⁶ S. Oost, "Aetius and Majorian," *Classical Philology* 59 (1964), pp. 23-29. This is based on a close analysis of Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.126-294. For Aetius' ambitions see Stein (1), pp. 347-348.

and gave him the crucial task of commanding the *scholae* and winning over the *bucellarii* of Aetius, and with this assignment went the post of Count of Domestics.⁷⁷ A few months later when Valentinian himself was struck down Majorian was a leading candidate for the succession, though he was then only about twenty-seven years of age.⁷⁸ Three years later Majorian did in fact ascend the throne, having seized power from the Gallic Emperor Avitus with the help of his old friend Ricimer. In this alliance Ricimer represented the barbarian military forces, and Majorian the Italian aristocracy which resented the rule of Avitus and his Gallic associates. Majorian proved himself a strong ruler, and succeeded both in re-establishing imperial authority in Gaul and in putting through an ambitious program of internal reform. His successes, however, were his undoing, for they earned him the fear and enmity of Ricimer. In 461 Majorian was treacherously seized and executed, and in his place Ricimer installed a pliable senator who was content to fill the role of a figurehead. Henceforth power lay in the hands of the barbarians and their commanders.⁷⁹

* * *

With Majorian's death in 461 the Western Empire reached a turning point. Majorian fell, essentially, because he was a Roman military leader without Roman troops to lead. For as the government lost control of the Western provinces its recruiting grounds shrank to Italy itself, and there no conscription is recorded after the death of Aetius. As a result

⁷⁷ Sidonius, *Carm.* 5.306-308; cf. Stein (1), pp. 341, 348-349; W. B. Anderson, ed., *Sidonius: Poems and Letters* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1936), p. 87, n. 2.

⁷⁸ Joh. Ant., fr. 201 (6); cf. Stein (1), p. 365, and Oost, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

⁷⁹ Stein (1), pp. 372-380. V. Sirago, *Galla Placidia e la Trasformazione Politica dell'Occidente* (Louvain, 1961), pp. 48-52, discusses the sharp separation which appeared by the end of the fourth century between the Romanized caste of civil functionaries and the barbarian (or semi-barbarian) military classes.

the Roman army proper dwindled away to nothing, and the army of the Western Empire came to be constituted entirely of barbarian federates and mercenaries.⁸⁰ Military leadership passed into the hands of barbarian princes and *condottieri*. A transitional type is Orestes, a Roman who grew up in Pannonia under the rule of the Huns and served them as interpreter and then ambassador. Because of his ability to deal with the Huns he was able to enter the service of the Western Empire and rise to the rank of marshal and finally patrician. He failed to satisfy the demands of his troops, however, and was succeeded by a true representative of the new order, Odoacer. The latter was a prince of the Sciri, evidently a tribe of Central Asia which wandered into Europe at the time of the Hunnish upheaval. When the Sciri were decisively defeated by the Ostrogoths Odoacer led his surviving followers into the army of the Western Empire, and in 476 he assumed leadership of the discontented barbarian troops. Orestes and his son the puppet Emperor were deposed, Odoacer was acclaimed King by his troops, and as such he ruled Italy. A new military class had taken control.⁸¹

Under these circumstances the position of the Roman officer class and its institutions was anomalous, for of course the new rulers preferred to have men of their own stamp about themselves. And this spelled the end of the *scholae*. It did not, however, come about at once. One of Odoacer's most trusted subordinates was a Roman officer named Pierius who served as his Count of Domestics. Pierius carried out the important assignment of bringing the Roman settlers in Noricum to Italy, and later he fell fighting for Odoacer at the river Adda. One of the few surviving documents from Odo-

⁸⁰ Jones (1), p. 244.

⁸¹ Stein (1), pp. 398-399; Jones (1), pp. 244-245; G. Lippold, "Orestes no. 12," *PW* 18 (1939), coll. 1012-1013; R. Reynolds and R. Lopez, "Odoacer: German or Hun?" *American Historical Review* 52 (1946), pp. 36-53.

acer's reign records a gift of Sicilian lands made by him to his « illustrious and magnificent brother Pierius. »⁸² Presumably Pierius was attended and assisted in his duties by the *scholae* under his command, but there is no explicit evidence of this.

The end came in the sixth century. Theodoric, who had his capital and palace at Ravenna, left the *scholares* and *domestici* in Rome at the palace—perhaps to serve as caretakers—and assigned each man a pension for himself and his descendants, though « nothing military remained except the name and this pay which barely sufficed to maintain them. » The office of Count of Domestics ceased to exist, only the title remaining in use as a mark of honor. Then when the Ostrogothic kingdom was conquered by Justinian the Logothete Alexander abolished the pensions as an economy measure, and so the *scholae* themselves vanished.⁸³

Thus the institutions of the Roman military elite finally disappeared in the West. The barbarians who had been hired to serve as auxiliaries and enlisted men had ended by gaining control of the Roman army and then the Roman state itself. In the Eastern Empire this did not take place, and there the old institutions, among them the *scholae*, continued to exist.

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Even in the West, however, the historical significance of the *scholae* did not end in 540. By the time the *scholae* were disbanded they had established military and political traditions which were accepted throughout the Empire, and these traditions exerted a powerful influence on the barbarian successor

⁸² Anon. Val. 53; cf. A. Nagl, "Pierius no. 2," *PW* 20 (1941), coll. 1220-1221; J. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1896), vol. 3, pp. 150-154.

⁸³ Procopius, *HA* 26.27-30; cf. Jones (1), p. 256; Stein (2), pp. 446-447, 565.

states which were established on the ruins of the Western Empire during the fifth and sixth centuries.

Under the Later Empire aristocrats, important officials, high priests and even bishops had grown accustomed to going about attended by armed retainers. To have a retinue, and to keep it splendidly attired and organized on military lines, became a generally accepted expression of power and importance. This was part of a general process in which the ceremonies and practices of the imperial court were widely imitated and so influenced all areas and classes of the Empire.⁸⁴ Ammianus tells us that Roman aristocrats had their households in the city (*familiae urbanae*) organized on military lines, were accustomed to go through the city preceded by an armed retinue, and even on their way to the baths would be attended by fifty attendants.⁸⁵ Roman governors and high officials were regularly attended by a military escort. Thus we are told of a *ducenarius procurator* in Antioch that he « struts in the market-place, reading and dictating letters as he walks in public, and attended by a bodyguard, some preceding, some following, and that too in numbers. »⁸⁶ When Maximinus Daia appointed high priests for the provinces he provided each with a military escort and staff officers, and during the fourth century at least one bishop followed this precedent and went about with an armed retinue.⁸⁷ Often these armed retainers were called *bu-cellarii*, a military term used also for an officer's attendants. The word itself came into general use under Honorius.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ R. MacMullen, "Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus," *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964), pp. 435-455.

⁸⁵ Ammianus 14.6.17; 28.4.8-9.

⁸⁶ Eusebius, *HE* 7.30.8, tr. J. Oulton, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History*, (London and New York, 1932), vol. 2, p. 21. Cf. Eusebius, *HE* 8.9.7.

⁸⁷ Eusebius, *HE* 8.14.9 (high priests), Theodoret, *HE* 4.21.4 (Bishop Lucius of Alexandria).

⁸⁸ Olympiodorus, fr. 7, 11; cf. Jones (2), p. 666, and C. Lecrivain, "Les soldats privés au Bas Empire," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 10 (1890), pp. 267-283.

When the barbarian successor states were established during the fifth and sixth centuries these traditions continued to influence institutions. Many German leaders had served in the Roman armies and so had absorbed Roman traditions, and in general the invaders showed themselves quite ready to adopt any Roman institutions which seemed useful.⁸⁹ The clearest example of continuity is provided by the political system fashioned by Theodoric in Italy. He based his authority over Romans on his position as an imperial marshal (*magister militum*), organized his court in part at least as a marshal's *officium*, and kept many Roman forms and institutions intact.⁹⁰ To a lesser degree the same was true in the other barbarian states. In the Frankish kingdom, for example, the Roman fiscal machinery was still working at the end of the sixth century.⁹¹

Not least among the Roman traditions which persisted were those derived from the *scholae*. As noted above, the Germans early came to know these traditions through service in the Roman army and indeed in the *scholae* themselves, and in all the barbarian successor states the German monarchs were surrounded by armed retainers and officers who may easily be compared with the *scholares*. They appear among the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Lombards and Franks, and writers of the age felt no hesitation in calling them *bucellarii* and *scholares*, although German terms such as *antrustiones* and *gasindi* were also used.⁹²

⁸⁹ A. Dopsch, *Wirtschaftliche und Soziale Grundlagen der Europäischen Kultur-entwicklung*, 2nd ed. (2 vols., Vienna, 1920-1923), vol. 1, pp. 94-202, gives a general survey of the penetration of Roman traditions and institutions among the Germans before and after the invasions to support his general thesis of continuity.

⁹⁰ Stein (2), pp. 119-124; Jones (1), pp. 254-255.

⁹¹ Jones (1), p. 261.

⁹² P. Guilhaume, *Essai sur l'origine de la noblesse en France au moyen âge* (Paris, 1902), has collected the evidence. A striking example of continuity in military affairs not mentioned by Guilhaume is an incident mentioned by Procopius, BG 1.12.16-19; upon the disappearance of imperial authority in Gaul

It has been argued that the creation of this class of royal retainers was inspired by the example of the *scholares*, and that these Germanic *scholares* formed the core of a new service nobility which replaced the old German tribal nobilities.⁹³ On the other hand, just the reverse has been argued: that the Roman *comitatus* itself was derived from the German *Gefolgschaft* described by Tacitus, that the *comitatus* of the barbarian monarchies was therefore directly or indirectly native in origin, and that in any case the old German tribal nobility continued to exist and to flourish.⁹⁴ Most recently leading scholars have chosen to avoid the question of priority and have described the medieval institution of armed retainers as derived from both German and Roman origins.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the question of priority is of significance, for the institution of armed retainers led to the institution of the household knight which exerted great influence on the de-

Roman troops stationed there voluntarily went over to the Arborychi and Germans, and, says Procopius over a century later, "even at the present day they are clearly recognized as belonging to the legions to which they were assigned when they served in ancient times, and they always carry their own standards when they enter battle, and always follow the customs of their fathers" (tr. H. Dewing, *Procopius*, London and New York, 1919, vol. 3, p. 123).

⁹³ Guilhiermoz, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-85. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Monarchie franque* (Paris, [1888]), pp. 76-87, argued more subtly that the replacement of the old nobility was part of the creation of a strong monarchy.

⁹⁴ Dopsch, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 42-48, 100-109. The extreme case for German origins was stated by O. Seeck, "Das deutsche Gefolgswesen auf römischen Boden," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, germ. Abt.* 17 (1896), pp. 98-105. Dopsch, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 300-306, rejected this while still insisting on the independence of Germanic institutions.

⁹⁵ M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, tr. L. Manyon (Chicago, 1961), pp. 151-156; F. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, tr. P. Grierson (London, 1952), pp. 3-4. C. Stephenson, "The Origin and Significance of Feudalism," *American Historical Review* 46 (1941), pp. 788-812, summarizes the basic literature on the subject and stresses a distinction between the *antrustiones* and the vassals of a later age, considering the first of Roman origin, the second of Germanic.

velopment of feudalism and the feudal aristocracy.⁹⁶ While the problem of its relation to the ancient German nobility seems insoluble owing to the lack of evidence, this is not the only approach possible. A more productive alternative is to consider the armed retainers of the successor monarchies in connection with the systems of which they formed a part.

This approach leads to a consideration of the royal establishments of the successor kingdoms, for it is there that the armed retainer first appears in our sources. As such he is a king's man, part of the king's court, his *palatium*. And the origin of the court and its organization is quite clear. Samuel Dill summed up his conclusions on the Frankish court as follows: «The court of the Merovingians is a kind of shadow or reflection of the court of the Roman Emperors. Its very name, *Palatium*, recalls the centre of the Imperial regime. It designates not only the residence of the sovereign, but also the seat of government; and a great number of the *palatini* are not only courtiers in attendance, but political officers whose work may lie sometimes in the bureaus of the Palace, sometimes in seats of provincial administration.»⁹⁷ Its officers bore the old Roman titles: *comites*, *domestici*, *tribuni*, *consiliarii*, *referendarii* or, collectively, *proceres*.⁹⁸ The *palatia* of the other successor states were similarly organized, with similar titles, and show equally their debt to Roman traditions.

⁹⁶ Bloch, *loc. cit.*, and pp. 283-292, where he discusses the evidence pointing to the disappearance of pre-feudal aristocracies during the age of the barbarian kingdoms. For the later significance of household knights see Bryce Lyon, *From Fief to Indenture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 182-189.

⁹⁷ S. Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London, 1926), p. 137; see pp. 106-154 for a full discussion of the Frankish court.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-140; cf. J. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (New York, 1962), pp. 1-24, especially p. 9: "The Franks may well have misunderstood and failed to use much of what they found of government and administration in Gaul, but they certainly brought no alternative with them. Their rule was Roman-derivative."

As was observed by Fustel de Coulanges, the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks and Lombards did not copy these institutions from one another; their *palatia* are clear indications of the persistence of Roman political forms and traditions.⁹⁹

Seen in this context, the role of the armed retainers of the barbarian kings must surely have been largely conditioned by the traditions of the *scholae*. Whatever the precedents of the *Gefolgschaft* or the continuity provided by an ancient nobility may have been, the *antrustiones* of the Frankish *palatium* and their equivalents in the other successor states functioned within a set of institutions and traditions based on those of the Later Empire. Thus the traditions of the Roman military elite and the *scholae* in particular continued to influence the development of Europe long after the Empire itself had ceased to exist.

⁹⁹ Fustel de Coulanges, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165; his chapter on the palace of the Merovingians, pp. 135-164, emphasizes the influence of Roman models even more strongly than does Wallace-Hadrill. For Ostrogothic institutions see Stein (2), pp. 119-124; and for a general survey of the successor kingdoms see Jones (1), pp. 253-262, and F. Lot, *The End of the Ancient World*, tr. P. and M. Leon (New York, 1931), pp. 243-251.

Chapter X

REFORM IN THE EAST (A.D. 457-565)

During the years in which the Western Empire was falling under barbarian sway developments took a different course in the Eastern Empire. There a strong native group existed within the ruling classes whose members realized the dangers posed by the barbarian *condottieri* and were determined to prevent them from gaining power. The first test came in 399-400 when Gainas, a German officer who had risen to the post of Marshal at Court (*magister militum in praesenti*), occupied Constantinople with his troops and attempted to seize control of the Empire. Gainas was a protégé of Stilicho, and he was evidently aiming at a dominant position in the Eastern Empire similar to Stilicho's in the West. The attempt failed, however, owing to the resolute opposition of an « anti-German party » at court, the people of Constantinople, and the army of Asia. Gainas was driven out of the Empire, the anti-German party took control, and a reform program was instituted. Thus in 400 a barbarian bid for power received a decisive check in the East, while in the West Stilicho was entering on his first consulship. These events marked the growing divergence of the two Empires.¹

Synesius of Cyrene voiced the sentiments of the anti-German party in a remarkable speech, « On Kingship, » in

¹ Bury (1), pp. 126-137; Stein (1), pp. 235-239, speaks of the "anti-German party." The divergence of the Western and Eastern Empires during this period is demonstrated at length by E. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire Romain*: 395-410 (Paris, 1951).

which he suggested a program of reform which would enable the state to maintain control of its armed forces. Native recruitment was essential, he argued, for the safety of the Empire, and in particular natives should staff the guards and officers corps. Barbarians were to be excluded from positions of trust.²

During the next fifteen years, in fact, an anti-barbarian policy was pursued, and the officers corps seems to have been purged. The names of twenty commanders are known for the period 400-415, and of these three are Armenian or Persian, and seventeen are Greek or Roman. Another indication of change was a decline in military effectiveness; in Africa and Asia Minor the imperial forces disintegrated in the face of tribal incursions because of the cowardice and inefficiency of their Roman officers. Consequently a change of policy became necessary. In 418 a revolt in Palestine was crushed by an army under the command of an Arian Goth, Plinthis, and as a reward he was named consul for 419. Thereafter more and more military posts were given to Germans. In 441 both Marshals at Court were Germans, Areobindus and Aspar. They were related, and a son of Areobindus married Aspar's sister. Furthermore, a *missorium* made in honor of Aspar's consulship in 434 shows that he was also related to Plinthis. Thus under Theodosius II, a new group of barbarian generals appeared, closely knit at the top by family ties.³

On the death of Theodosius the deciding voice in choosing his successor was that of Aspar, and he chose Marcian, « a retired military officer of no distinction » who had served both

² Synesius, *De regno*, ed. and tr. Ch. Lacombrade, *Le discours sur la royauté* (Paris, 1951). Cf. Stein (1), pp. 235-236; Demougeot, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-266.

³ O. Seeck, "Arkadios no. 2," *PW* 2 (1896), coll. 1151-1152 (on 400-415); Jones (1), pp. 181-182 (Theodosius II); R. Delbrueck, *Die Consular-Diptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1929), pp. 154-155 and plate 35 (Ardaburius, Aspar, Plinthis); W. Ensslin, "Plinta," *PW* 21 (1951), coll. 457-458.

Aspar's father and Aspar himself as *domesticus*. His reign saw a revival of German dominance. Then on Marcian's death Aspar chose as his successor another of his clients, « an obscure officer named Leo who had once been agent of his estates and was now tribune of the Mattiarii. » Thus during the years when Aetius and Ricimer were ruling the Western Empire through their puppets, another German general was doing much the same in the East.⁴ It is significant in this connection that it is recorded in passing that Aetius sent a Moorish jester to Aspar as a gift; they were evidently on terms of friendship, and no doubt this was at least partly due to their similar positions and political aims.⁵

Leo, however, refused to remain a puppet, and after a long struggle succeeded in destroying Aspar and with him the power of the German generals. He did this with his palace guards, and so the episode deserves close study.

Leo could not depend on the *scholae* in his struggle with Aspar. The guards constituted a formidable force at the time and were indeed still used for special missions, as the incident of John Chrysostom discussed in an earlier chapter indicates. A later example occurred in 444, when Theodosius sent his Count of Domestics to Jerusalem to execute two men suspected of improper relations with the Empress. This Count was of such importance and wealth that after his death the marriage of his daughter became a subject of negotiation between Attila and the Emperor.⁶

Nevertheless, the *scholae* could not be used against Aspar

⁴ Jones (1), pp. 218-222, from which the quotes on Marcian (p. 218) and Leo (p. 221) are taken. Jones emphasizes the extent of German influence under Marcian much more than do Stein (1), pp. 331, 351-353, and Bury (1), pp. 236-239. Jones' view was anticipated with convincing arguments by E. A. Thompson, "The Foreign Policies of Theodosius II and Marcian," *Hermathena* 76 (1950), pp. 58-75.

⁵ Priscus, fr. 11.

⁶ Priscus, fr. 8; cf. O. Seeck, "Saturninus no. 11," *PW* 2A (1923), col. 216.

because they, like their counterparts in the West, were closely connected with the barbarian military elite and were largely barbarians themselves in origin. An incident involving St. Daniel the Stylite makes this clear. In 476 the usurper Basiliscus issued an encyclical condemning the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon and supporting the Monophysite cause. As a result the monks roused the orthodox masses of Constantinople to arms and the patriarch supported them. Basiliscus then sent for St. Daniel to act as mediator. When the saint approached with a crowd of orthodox supporters a Goth leaned out of a window and laughed at him. Then when Daniel attempted to bring his followers with him into the palace he was prevented from doing so. The soldiers involved in the incident are described as « the *scholares* who were doing sentinel duty at the time. »⁷ It is clear from this passage that these guards were Arian Germans, and they were probably representative of the corps as a whole.

Under these circumstances Leo had to turn elsewhere for support against Aspar. His chance came in 466 when an Isaurian chieftain came to him with evidence that Ardaburius, the son of Aspar and commander of the army of the Orient, had engaged in treasonable correspondence with the Persians. Leo called a council of state, had the letters read aloud, and forced Aspar to agree that his son was guilty. Then Leo dismissed Ardaburius and appointed in his place Jordanes, a Vandal, but recently converted to the Orthodox faith (which implied a shift in political allegiance). The Isaurian chieftain was renamed Zeno and appointed Count of Domestics. At about this time a new corps of palace guards appears, the *excubitores*, recruited among the Isaurians, and their formation must surely be placed in connection with the appointment of Zeno.⁸

⁷ *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 75.

⁸ *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 49 (conversion of Jordanes), 55 (appointment of

Thus in 466 Leo checked the power of Aspar, placed an adherent in command of the army of the Orient, and established a new corps of guards which, while barbarian, was at least native in recruitment. For a few years an uneasy balance of power prevailed between the Isaurian and Gothic forces at court. Then in 471 the conflict came to a head and was resolved by murder. Zeno learned that Aspar's son Ardaburius was trying to win over the Isaurians in the capital to his father's side. Zeno informed Leo, the Emperor summoned Aspar and Ardaburius to the palace, and there the Gothic leaders were attacked and killed by the palace eunuchs.⁹

Leo faced the crucial test of his policy immediately after the removal of Aspar. Ostrys, a barbarian soldier who had risen to the rank of Count and Marshal through the patronage of Aspar, led Aspar's Gothic *bucellarii* in an attack on the palace to avenge their master. In this crisis Leo did not call upon the *scholares*, who had played no role in the fall of Aspar and now took no part in defending the palace. Evidently their barbarian origins and sympathies rendered them unreliable. Instead Leo turned to Zeno and his new corps of *excubitores*, who now appear for the first time. Ostrys was defeated and forced to flee, and with his flight the danger of barbarian domination was averted.¹⁰ The new corps of *excubitores* had played a crucial role in the crisis, and henceforth it, and not the *scholae palatinae*, was the most important unit of the palace guards.

Jordanes and Zeno); cf. N. Baynes, "The Vita S. Danielis Stylitae," *English Historical Review* 40 (1925), pp. 397-402.

⁹ Candidus, fr. 1 (intrigues of Ardaburius and assassination in palace); Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon, sub anno 471* (use of eunuchs); cf. Jones (1), pp. 222-223.

¹⁰ Joh. Malalas, *Chronographia* 14 (ed. Dindorf, pp. 371-372); Theophanes, A.M. 5964. The sources and chronology are discussed in detail by E. W. Brooks, "The Emperor Zenon and the Isaurians," *English Historical Review* 8 (1893), pp. 209-238.

A short passage in John Lydus is the only direct evidence we have regarding the formation of the new corps. « And the emperor Leo was the first who organized the *excubitores*—300 in number in accordance with ancient precedents—as guards of the palace exits. »¹¹ As noted above, this almost certainly occurred sometime around 466 when Zeno gained Leo's favor and was appointed Count of Domestics.

In turning to the Isaurians for support Leo followed a precedent set by Theodosius II. During the fourth century the Isaurians had been in a state of chronic insurrection, and Ammianus describes at length their plundering forays which extended as far as Cyprus. During the years 404-407 the government conducted a series of campaigns to stop these incursions.¹² Evidently the Isaurians were subdued, for in 447 Theodosius II summoned a force of Isaurians to defend Constantinople against the Huns. Their leader was named Zeno; when the future Emperor Zeno entered Leo's service he was called Tarasicodissa and was renamed Zeno by the Emperor, evidently with the earlier Zeno in mind. This first Zeno became quite powerful, so much so that Theodosius turned against him, « for he was afraid that sometime he also might engage in a revolution, and he thought he was in danger of a cowardly attack. »¹³ So ended the first experiment with the use of Isaurians.

¹¹ Joh. Lydus, *De mag.* 1.16; cf. O. Fiebiger, "Excubitores," *PW* 6 (1909), col. 1577. The "precedents" cited by Lydus are drawn from the early history of Rome and therefore shed no light on the institutions of the Later Empire. Reservations about Lydus' statement are discounted by A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 65, n. 45.

¹² Ammianus 14.2; Zosimus 5.25; cf. Bury (1), pp. 159-160.

¹³ John of Antioch, fr. 199 (1), tr. C. D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 104. Cf. E. A. Thompson, "The Isaurians under Theodosius II," *Hermathena* 68 (1946), pp. 18-31, who emphasizes a change of policy with the accession of Marcian.

Leo's use of the Isaurians was more successful, no doubt largely because he treated Zeno generously from the first, gave him his daughter in marriage, and so made him a loyal ally. Another factor, however, was that the new corps of *excubitores* was more than just a group of Isaurians serving under their tribal chief. The first Zeno is described as follows: « He was a man of consular rank and had a great force of Isaurians under his command. »¹⁴ Leo, however, evidently kept control of recruitment, and the *excubitores* were by no means all Isaurians.

One text which shows how Leo recruited soldiers concerns an officer who left the Emperor's service to enter a monastic brotherhood. « At that time the blessed Emperor Leo heard from many about a certain Titus, a man of vigor who dwelt in Gaul and had in his service a number of men well trained for battle; so he sent for him and honored him with the rank of Count that he might have him to fight on his behalf if he were forced to go to war. » Titus, however, soon after coming to Constantinople, elected to follow St. Daniel the Stylite and therefore left the Emperor's service. Leo sent a message of reproach to him, saying, « I brought you up from your country because I wanted to have you quite near me. »¹⁵

Titus' position at court is not clear, but there is no doubt about another soldier who served Leo, the future Emperor Justin. He was born ca. 450 of Thracian, Latin-speaking peasant stock in Illyria, and when still quite young he and two other peasants set out for the capital to join the army and escape the hardships of rural life.

¹⁴ Priscus, fr. 8, tr. C. D. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁵ *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 60-61, tr. E. Dawes and N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 43-44. Jones (2), pp. 665-666, considers Titus leader of a federate band, but it would seem that he had a more important position from the high rank he held and the Emperor's statement about keeping him "quite near me."

And they came to Byzantium, walking on foot and themselves carrying cloaks slung over their shoulders, and when they arrived they had in these cloaks nothing more than toasted bread which they had put in at home; and the Emperor enrolled them in the ranks of the soldiers and designated them for the Palace guard. For they were all men of very fine figure.¹⁶

Justin was born ca. 450 and came to the capital about twenty years later, so he and his comrades must have been enrolled in the *excubitores* just a few years after it came into existence.¹⁷ Evidently the new corps was from the first not entirely Isaurian.

Furthermore, Justin was one of the first commanders of the *excubitores* to enjoy an independent position as Count of Excubitors (*comes excubitorum*), and indeed seems to have been the first. The increased importance accorded the new corps and its commander is closely connected with the history of the Empire under Zeno and Anastasius.¹⁸

When the corps of *excubitores* was organized its commander, Zeno, held the post of Count of Domestics, and the *excubitores* were under his command along with the other *scholae palatinae*.¹⁹ Zeno was theoretically subordinate to the Master of Offices, but as heir to the throne and chief of the Isaurians his personal authority rendered him the actual

¹⁶ Procopius, *HA* 6.3, tr. H. Dewing, *Procopius* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1935), vol. 6, p. 69; cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-66.

¹⁷ Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, p. 63 and n. 43, discusses the evidence fully. 450 is the more probable date, and is accepted by E. Stein, "*Iustinus*," *PW* 10 (1919), coll. 1314-1315.

¹⁸ *Vita S. Danielis Stylitae* 55; cf. Jones (1), p. 222.

¹⁹ The basic study of the period and sources on which subsequent accounts are based is E. W. Brooks, "The Emperor Zenon and the Isaurians," *English Historical Review* 8 (1893), pp. 209-238.

commander of the guards. Once his power was established, however, Zeno appointed as Master his friend Illus, whose authority was henceforth second only to his own and who clearly controlled the guards. In the crisis of 479, for example, when the revolutionaries led by Marcian gained control of the capital, it was Illus who brought over Isaurian guards from Chalcedon and rescued the Emperor. In the following year Theodoric Strabo advanced on Constantinople at the head of his Gothic army « and would easily have taken it, if Illus had not occupied the gates first and guarded it. »²⁰

Illus was an Isaurian who had come to Constantinople with Zeno and had been enrolled in the original group of *excubitores*, and so his ties were with that body rather than with other palatine corps under his command. Furthermore, he represented the Isaurian threat to the privileged position enjoyed by the largely Germanic *scholae*. All these factors were involved in an attempted assassination organized by the Empress Ariadne. She was able to persuade a German *scholaris* to attack Illus at a performance in the Hippodrome. The *scholaris* was standing behind Illus as a member of his personal guard, and was able to cut off Illus' ear before he himself was struck down. Soon after this Illus exchanged his post for a safer one in the provinces.²¹ His place as Master of Offices was taken by another Isaurian, Longinus of Cardala, who likewise held a position of great power in the state. The office of Master of Offices gained great power under Zeno because of its control of the *excubitores*, and holders of the post continued to be military leaders and therefore very influential at court under succeeding emperors in the fifth and sixth centuries.²²

²⁰ Joh. Ant., fr. 211 (3) and fr. 211 (5); translation of latter from Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 180. Cf. Stein (2), pp. 9-10, 15-19; A. Nagl, "Illos," *PW* 9 (1916), coll. 2532-2541.

²¹ Eustathius, fr. 4; John Malalas, *Chronographia* 15 (ed. Dindorf, pp. 387-388).

²² Boak, pp. 96-97, reviews the evidence briefly; being more conscious

However, under Anastasius an important development occurred. Soon after his accession he was faced with a revolt in which the Isaurian guards led by Longinus were involved. This led to a bitter struggle with the Isaurians both at court and in the provinces. Anastasius finally triumphed over the Isaurians in 497, and this ended their power and special position at court.²³

It is in connection with the Isaurian War and the conflicts of the following years that Justin first appears in our sources, and his prominence marks the rise in prestige enjoyed by the *excubitores*. Justin served in the Isaurian War with the rank of general.²⁴ Then a few years later (503) he was one of the commanders of the expeditionary force hastily assembled and sent to fight the Persians after they had taken Amida. It was led by four generals who divided the chief command, one of them being the Master of Offices, Celer. No less than five junior commanders are also listed, among them Justin, and we are expressly told that « each commander by himself led his own division separately against the enemy. »²⁵ Later in the campaign Celer took his troops on a plundering foray into Arzanene, and Justin went with him.²⁶ The implication of these passages is that Justin served under Celer but had a high rank and a certain autonomy. He is listed as a divisional commander, while the field commander of the *scholae*

of the early history of the office, he views the military missions of later Masters as "exceptional."

²³ Stein (2), pp. 82-84.

²⁴ Procopius, *HA* 6.4-5; Joh. Ant., fr. 214 (8). Justin's position (ὑποστράτηγος) was equivalent to chief of staff and deputy to the commander; cf. Grosse, p. 296. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, p. 66, translates this as lieutenant general, which is of course only an approximation. The important point is that Justin had risen from the ranks to a post near the top when still in his middle forties.

²⁵ Procopius, *BP* 1.8.1-4; translation from H. Dewing, *Procopius* (London and New York, 1914), vol. 1, p. 63. Cf. Stein (2), pp. 92-101.

²⁶ Procopius, *BP* 1.8.21-22 and 2.15.7.

is not. Then several years later Justin played a leading role in crushing the rebellion of Vitalian, and again no mention is made of the *scholae*.²⁷ These facts give the impression that the *excubitores* had so increased in importance that the corps and its commander had risen to a position coordinate with that of all the other *scholae*.

This impression is supported by all we know of the circumstances surrounding the election of an emperor to succeed Anastasius in 518. Anastasius himself had been chosen by the empress, the patriarch and the chief civil and military dignitaries, among whom the Master of Offices represented the palace troops. After the election of Anastasius the Master sent for him through the Counts of Protectors and Domestics. Neither here nor in the account of Anastasius' appearance in the Circus and coronation is any mention made of the *excubitores* or its commander.²⁸

In 518 the situation was very different. The Emperor having died in the night, this was made known by the palace ushers (*silentiarii*) to the Master of Offices and the Count of Excubitors, Celer and Justin, who went to the palace and then summoned their troops. Celer sent his orders to the *candidati* and the other *scholares*, Justin to the enlisted men, tribunes and officers (*vicarii*) of the *excubitores*. When they came to the palace the troops were addressed by their respective commanders. Justin spoke to all those whom he had summoned; then Celer spoke, but only « to the *candidati* and the officers of the *scholares*. »²⁹

It seems, therefore, that by 518 the *excubitores* had attained the position of the elite corps among the palace guards, for the above passage indicates that an enlisted *excubitor* was placed on an equal footing with the *candidati* and other

²⁷ Joh. Ant., fr. 103; cf. Bury (1), p. 451.

²⁸ *De cer.* 1.92; cf. Bury (1), pp. 429-430.

²⁹ *De cer.* 1.93.

officers of the *scholae*. An additional indication of the superior prestige of the *excubitores* is, of course, the fact that they were able to gain the throne for Justin, their commander, over the opposition of the *scholae* and the palace chamberlains, and despite Justin's own advanced age, inexperience and lack of education. He gained the throne, says Procopius, « because of the power of his office. »³⁰

Chance and personality no doubt also had a part in Justin's rise to power. However, the great power of the Count of Excubitors in the sixth century is attested by Procopius' account of the conspiracy of Artabanes. The latter was a trusted general under Justinian who in 548 attempted to promote a palace revolution. He indirectly approached Germanus, the Emperor's cousin, who immediately reported the plot to Marcellus, Count of Excubitors. Marcellus recognized the gravity of the matter but on his own authority decided not to inform Justinian until he could investigate the story, for, said he, « I am not at all accustomed either to believe myself or to report to the emperor anything which I have not thoroughly verified. » Later, when Germanus came under suspicion for not having informed Justinian immediately about the plot, it was Marcellus who cleared him of all charges.³¹

Marcellus' role in this story is a striking indication of the great power enjoyed by the Count of Excubitors in the sixth century. It was he who was charged with guarding the person of the emperor, assisted of course by the *excubitores* under his command. Two anecdotes concerning Justin's duties while Count of Excubitors, for example, show him walking

³⁰ Procopius, *HA* 6.11, tr. H. Dewing, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 71. Cf. *HA* 6.12 (on Justin's ignorance and inexperience); *De cer.* 1.93 (on Justin's election); Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-86, 102-108.

³¹ Procopius, *BG* 3.32; cf. Stein (2), pp. 590-592; Bury (2), pp. 66-69.

immediately behind the emperor in procession and reporting to him first thing in the morning.³²

In short, by the sixth century the *scholae* had lost their primary mission: to guard the emperor. They still maintained, however, certain prerogatives and fulfilled certain functions.

* * *

As the *excubitores* rose in importance and assumed the task of defending the emperor's person, the *scholae* declined steadily in military effectiveness. This was probably a matter of policy, going back to the crisis of 471 after the execution of Aspar and his sons. Ostrys attacked the palace, which was defended by forces under Basiliscus and Zeno, and we are specifically told his forces engaged in battle with the *excubitores*.³³ No mention is made of the *scholares*, probably because they were in sympathy with the barbarian party which Ostrys represented.

This incident marks a turning point, for we are told that it was Zeno, already Count of Domestics, who instituted a change in the recruitment of *scholares*: « He was the first to admit men to the corps who were not distinguished for valor but were rather his friends and clients, and not for their labor and bravery in battle but rather for a price paid, so that men entered who were clearly unfit and untrained for war. »³⁴ As a result the corps came to exist entirely for ceremonial display and ceased to have any connection with combat or combat troops.

Just how far the *scholae* declined in military effectiveness became apparent in 559 when an army of Kotrigurs invaded

³² Anon. Vales. 76-77.

³³ John Malalas, *Chronographia* 14 (ed. Dindorf, p. 371); cf. Theophanes, A.M. 5964.

³⁴ Agathias 5.15.

the Empire. After defeating two armies sent against them the barbarians advanced on the capital itself, at the moment unprotected by any regular troops. Peasants and members of the circus factions were called up for service, and they were sent to man the Long Walls along with the *scholares*. Belisarius, called out of retirement to direct the defense of the city, found the civilians and *scholares* equally unfit for warfare. We are explicitly told by Agathias, a contemporary, that the *scholares* were « neither warlike nor even moderately versed in military matters. » In the actual fighting Belisarius depended almost entirely on a body of veterans who had served under him in previous campaigns.³⁵

As Agathias pointed out, the basic cause of this decline of the *scholares* in military effectiveness was the method of their recruitment; a *scholaris* gained his place by purchase, not by service. The practice of selling offices was officially recognized as early as the reign of Theodosius II, under whom an edict was issued regulating the price to be paid for a vacancy in the secretariats (*scrinia*). Zeno extended the practice to the consular rank itself to raise money.³⁶ It was Zeno who opened the *scholares* to purchase, as a result of which, says Procopius, « since the time when Zeno succeeded to the throne the way has been open for all, both cowards and wholly unwarlike men, to achieve the honor of this title. »³⁷

Justinian carried the process one step further. In order to raise money he pursued a general policy of multiplying honorary

³⁵ *Ibid.*; cf. Stein (2), pp. 535-540.

³⁶ C. J. 12.19.7 (443); cf. Jones (2), p. 576 (Theodosius II). Malchis, fr. 18; cf. Stein (2), pp. 68-69 (Zeno). Elsewhere Jones has noted that apart from the *scrinia* purchase of office was recognized officially "only in the more ornamental palatine services," including the *silentiarii* and *tribuni et notarii* as well as the *scholares* and *domestici*: "The Roman Civil Service (Clerical and Sub-Clerical Grades)," *JRS* 39 (1949), pp. 38-55; *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (Oxford, 1960), p. 212, n. 145.

³⁷ Procopius, HA 24.17, tr. H. Dewing, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

titles and selling them, so that during his reign there was an unparalleled increase in the number of dignities and titles.³⁸ The *scholares* were particularly affected by this policy. First all vacancies were sold, and 2,000 « supernumeraries » were added to their ranks, that is, men in addition to the corps' authorized strength. Later those supernumeraries were dismissed without compensation.³⁹ Similarly, posts in the *domestici* and *protectores* were filled by purchase, so that Procopius quite flatly says that the reason they enjoyed higher status and received more pay was that « they on their part have paid larger amounts for the name of belonging to the service. »⁴⁰

As a result of these policies the *scholae* ceased to be a military organization in any real sense. Members of the corps were mainly men of wealth who had invested their money in a commission as a sort of annuity and did so expecting to live an idle life at court. So repugnant was the idea of actually fighting that on several occasions Justinian blackmailed the *scholares* into giving up their pay for a time by threatening to send them to the front.⁴¹

This decline in military effectiveness may well have been desired by the government. In 518 the *scholares* had bitterly opposed the election of Justin, and one of them had in fact struck him in the face.⁴² They also showed their hostile attitude during the Nika Revolt, when the senatorial aristocracy stirred up the populace against the government and Justinian was in danger of losing his throne. In this crisis, says

³⁸ Stein (2), pp. 428-432.

³⁹ Procopius, *HA* 24.18-20. The supernumeraries were actually added under Justin; Justinian was commander of the *scholae* as Count of Domestics, and in any case played a dominant role during his uncle's reign. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-96.

⁴⁰ Procopius, *HA* 24.24, tr. H. Dewing, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-289.

⁴¹ Procopius, *HA* 24.21, 26; cf. Bury (2), pp. 358-359, n. 4.

⁴² *De cer.* 1.93.

Procopius, the soldiers at court—which must mean primarily the *scholares*—were not well-disposed to the Emperor and were not willing to fight for him.⁴³ In any case it is significant that in 527 an edict was issued which specified that commissions in the *scholae* would henceforth be issued by the Master of Offices only to men who had received an official receipt of approval from the emperor, and a heavy fine was exacted from anyone who entered the corps without a receipt. It has been suggested that the government established special control of recruitment in order to change the character of the corps.⁴⁴

Some functions, however, were left to the *scholares*. They appeared in parades and processions, played an important role in court ceremonies, and attended the Master of Offices on state occasions. They wore fine uniforms, « being splendidly attired in order to increase the dignity and magnificence of the court. »⁴⁵ When the Master of Offices received embassies from the Western Emperor, for example, the ceremony took place in the Master's *schola*, and the ambassadors were saluted by the *candidati*.⁴⁶ When the emperor received ambassadors from the West, if any of them had the rank of prefect he was formally greeted by the *domestici* and *protectores*.⁴⁷ Ambassadors from Persia were conducted to their imperial audience by an escort of *candidati*, and when the audience was over the *candidati* escorted them out at the command *transfer*.⁴⁸ In the coronation parade the Counts of

⁴³ Procopius, *BP* 1.24.39. Bury (2), p. 42, has this passage refer to the *excubitores* as well, but this is only conjectural. Procopius uses the general term *στρατιῶται*; whenever he wishes to refer to the *excubitores* he carefully uses *φύλακες*; cf. Stein (2), p. 821. In any case the 300 *excubitores* were too few to be an important factor in the crisis.

⁴⁴ *C. J.* 1.31.5 (527); cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 401–402.

⁴⁵ Agathias 5.15.

⁴⁶ *De cer.* 1.87.

⁴⁷ *De cer.* 1.88.

⁴⁸ *De cer.* 1.89–90. Boak, pp. 92–96, discusses the general competence of the Master in diplomatic affairs.

Scholares rode next to the emperor's carriage part of the way, and then their place (« at the hand-grips ») was taken by the Counts of Domestics.⁴⁹

Corippus gives a valuable review of the various units which figured in sixth-century ceremonies in his description of an imperial audience. The text is of unique importance in this matter and therefore deserves to be given in full:

The imperial palace has been decorated. All the nobles, summoned by the emperor's command, and the *scholae* of the palace have been commanded to take their assigned places. Now in their proper order they are drawn up, the corps of *decani*, of *cursores*, and of *agentes in rebus*, and along with them the corps of *candidati* under the palatine tribunes, and the company of *protectores*, all under the command of the Master of Offices.⁵⁰

Thus the reforms begun by Leo and Zeno ended by transforming the *scholae* into a body used only for ceremonial purposes. It will be noted that the list given by Corippus does not include the *excubitores* nor another new corps of guards created by Justinian, the *scribonēs*. These were the units which actually guarded the emperor, and they were kept small so as not to be a threat. The *scholae*, on the other hand, had been rendered ornamental and harmless.

* * *

As in the West, however, the elite traditions established by the *scholae* continued to mold military institutions.

⁴⁹ *De cer.* 1.91.

⁵⁰ Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* 3.162-167:

Ornata est Augusta domus, iussuque regentis acciti / proceres omnes, schola quaeque palati est iussa suis / adstare locis. Iamque ordine certo turba decanorum / cursorum, in rebus agentum, cumque palatinis stans / candida turba tribunis et protectorum numerus mandante / magistro.

Byzantine commanders surrounded themselves with picked men who served as their guards, staff and shock troops. The officers among these guards received special missions and on occasion commanded large bodies of troops, and many eventually rose to be commanders. The special position of a general's guardsman was modelled on that of the emperor's *scho-lae*; thus they took an oath of loyalty not only to the emperor but also to the commander whom they served.⁵¹

Belisarius had no less than 7,000 guards, and Procopius' account of his campaigns provides many instances of the high status they enjoyed. John the Armenian, for example, served as Belisarius' standard-bearer and had only NCO rank, but was given many important missions. Before the battle of Tricamaron it was John who was sent out with a cavalry detachment to reconnoitre the enemy, and in the battle itself he held the crucial command, the center, and led the charge. When the Vandals fled John was sent after them in pursuit to capture King Gelimer. While engaged in this John was killed accidentally, and—an extraordinary indication of his actual position—we are told that his untimely death caused sorrow not only to Belisarius, who attended his funeral, but to the Emperor Justinian himself. John held the rank of *optio*, a noncommissioned rating given to men in the quartermaster service, but it is clear he was really a trusted staff officer and would have been promoted to a command had he lived.⁵² Two of his fellow guardsmen, for example, are recorded as having

⁵¹ Procopius, *BV* 2.18.6; *BG* 2.29.20; cf. Mommsen, *GS* 6, pp. 241-246; C. Benjamin, *De Iustiniani imperatoris aetate quaestiones militares* (Berlin, 1892), pp. 18-40; F. Aussaresses, *L'armée Byzantine à la fin du VI^e siècle* (Paris, 1909), pp. 12-15; Grosse, p. 289.

⁵² Procopius, *BV* 1.17.1-2 (*optio* and standard-bearer); 2.2.1, 2.3.5-13 (Tricamaron); 2.4.9 (Gelimer); 2.4.17-23 (death of John); cf. Jones (2), pp. 626-627 on *optiones*.

stayed behind in Africa when Belisarius left and were given cavalry commands in Byzacium.⁵³

Another significant example of a guardsman's career in Procopius is that of Mundilas. After serving bravely under Belisarius in the capture of Rome he was placed in command of the troops sent to garrison Milan and Liguria. When he left he took a number of Belisarius' guards to serve as his own guard.⁵⁴ But the outstanding examples of guardsmen rising in the army were undoubtedly Belisarius himself and Sittas, whom Procopius names as Justinian's best generals.⁵⁵ Both of them began their careers as members of Justinian's guard when he was Marshal of Troops. In 526, on the outbreak of war with Persia, they were sent into Armenia with an army under their command, and soon after both were made generals. At the time they were both in their twenties, « wearing their first beards. » Sittas went on to marry a sister of the Empress and hold high commands; Belisarius became the leading general and most honored subject in the Empire.⁵⁶ Their careers are striking testimony to the advantages enjoyed by members of a general's guard, the elite corps which came to fill the place in the military system once occupied by the emperor's *scholae*.

Thus the use of the *scholae* as a general staff and officers' college continued to influence military organizations long after the *scholae* themselves had ceased to fill these roles.

⁵³ Procopius, *BV* 2.10.3-5.

⁵⁴ Procopius, *BG* 1.27.11 (guardsman), 2.12.27 (command).

⁵⁵ Procopius, *BP* 2.3.56.

⁵⁶ Procopius, *BP* 1.12.21; cf. L. Hartmann, "Belisarios," *PW* 3 (1899), coll. 209-210; E. Stein, "Sittas," *PW* 3A (1929), coll. 404-408.

CONCLUSION

The development, role and privileges of the *scholae palatinae* reflect changes of fundamental importance in the government and society of the Roman Empire during the third and fourth centuries. Whereas the emperor's bodyguards had occupied a most undistinguished place in the military hierarchy of the Early Empire, their successors under Aurelian, Constantine and Theodosius enjoyed high position and indeed came to play leading roles in military affairs and in politics as well. Along with this went many other changes which were part of a steady shift to absolutism and militarization. The emperor's role as commander and chosen leader of the troops became more and more central, and military traditions increasingly molded the organization and ceremonial of the imperial court. The related developments which support this interpretation have been discussed in the first two chapters.

Recruitment of the guards also reflected general trends of the period in that a large proportion were of barbarian origin, just as was the case in units of the regular army. An unusual feature, however, was the predominance of one group, the Rhineland Germans. This, it has been argued, probably goes back to the early career of Constantine when he established close ties based on mutual interest with the Franks and Alamanni. His guards were therefore bound to him by ties of personal loyalty and were in a sense his *clientes*, part of his household. This tradition continued, reinforced by their original obligation to defend the emperor with their lives, as actually happened at Adrianople and the other battles discussed above. Even after the emperors ceased to take the field

this bond was maintained, as when Honorius in 416 said that he did not wish to see « the most devoted members of the imperial bodyguard to be without glory, for they undertake armed imperial service and bear the responsibility not only of protecting their own company but also of guarding Our body, whence they have also obtained the name of bodyguard (*protectores*). »¹

Nevertheless, this military obligation was essentially the same as that under the Early Empire, and does not suffice to explain the great change in the status and role of guards in the Later Empire. Earlier emperors had had guards who were actually their slaves or *clientes*, as were the *custodes corporis Augusti* of the Julio-Claudians, and yet these guards were never associated with the ruler so closely as were the *scho-lares*.

This difference is perhaps most clearly apparent in religious matters. During the Early Empire the palace guards were neither required nor encouraged to conform to the ruler's religious preference; they did, in fact, continue in their own beliefs with official sanction. A number of inscriptions set up in Rome by the *equites singulares Augusti*, for example, indicate that the predominantly German members of the corps continued to worship and honor their ancestral gods while serving in the palace.² Under the Later Empire the situation was quite different.

Constantine held Christian services in the palace and required members of his staff and guard to attend.³ In this, moreover, he was only following precedents set by Diocletian

¹ C. Th. 6.24.9 (416): *Devotissimos protectores qui armatam militiam subeuntes non solum defendendi corporis sui, verum etiam protegendis lateris nostri sollicitudinem patiuntur, unde etiam protectorum nomen sortiti sunt...*; tr. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, 1952), p. 136.

² E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (Kendal, 1961), pp. 100-101.

³ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.17-18.

and Licinius, who had required their guards to participate in pagan sacrifice and had dismissed any who refused.⁴ At the beginning of the fifth century the principle was carried still further by excluding non-Catholic Christians from serving in the palace, « so that no person who disagrees with Us in faith and in religion shall be associated with Us in any way. »⁵ This insistence on strict adherence to orthodox Christianity within the palace is the more striking in that pagans continued to be numerous in the army and even among the highest-ranking officers. An edict of 326, for example, shows pagan coloring in the formal acclamation addressed to Constantine by soldiers as he entered a legionary headquarters building: « Augustus Constantine! The gods preserve you for us. Your salvation is our salvation. »⁶ Pagan traditions continued to be strong among the groups from which most of the troops and—at least in the early fourth century—most of the guards were drawn, the peasantry and the Germans, and if any of the Germans who entered the guard were Christians they would almost surely have been Arian rather than Catholic.⁷ Furthermore, it seems clear that outside the ranks of the imperial guard pagan sympathies were not a hindrance to advancement. Of the ten generals with whom Libanius corresponded four were certainly and three probably pagan, and only one was clearly Christian.⁸ Even more significant is the fact that in 385 the officers

⁴ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 1.15-16, and *HE* 8.6 (Diocletian); *De vita Const.* 2.5, and *HE* 10.8 (Licinius).

⁵ *C. Th.* 16.5.42 (408), tr. Pharr, *op. cit.*, p. 457. The edict is addressed to both the Master of the Offices and the Count of Domestics, so it applied to both enlisted men and officers.

⁶ *C. Th.* 7.20.2 (326), tr. Pharr, *op. cit.*, p. 179; cf. A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford, 1948), p. 102; A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), p. 24.

⁷ Momigliano, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24, and also 17-19 (peasants), 56-78 (Germans).

⁸ P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV^e siècle après J. C.* (Paris, 1955), pp. 179-181.

of an expeditionary army dispatched by the pious Gratian chose as their general to replace the deceased Bauto a known pagan, Arbogastes.⁹ Surely this would not have been possible if any consistent anti-pagan policies had been followed in the selection and promotion of officers. It seems evident that the emperor's religious preferences were not imposed on the soldiers and officers serving in his armies, but were imposed on his guards and on them alone. Why this distinction? The answer to that question would go far toward answering larger questions concerning the guards' status and role.

Briefly stated, I would suggest that the guards were treated in a special way with regard to religion because they were regarded as part of the emperor's *familia*, his official family. We actually have a reference to the *familia Caesaris* in Lactantius, in connection with Diocletian's persecution of the Christians among his *domestici*.¹⁰ The most revealing document in this connection, however, is Eusebius' account of the events immediately following the death of Constantine:

Immediately the assembled spearmen and bodyguards rent their garments and prostrated themselves on the ground, striking their heads and uttering lamentations and cries of sorrow, calling on their imperial lord and master, or rather, like true children, on their father, while their tribunes and centurions addressed him as their preserver, protector, and benefactor. The rest of the soldiery also came in respectful order to mourn as a flock the removal of their good shepherd.¹¹

⁹ Zosimus 4.53; cf. Stein (1), p. 210, for his pro-pagan politics.

¹⁰ Lactantius, *De mort. pers.* 14.5.

¹¹ Eusebius, *De vita Const.* 4.65, tr. E. Richardson, *Eusebius*, vol. 1 of *NPNL*, 2 (1890, rptd. Grand Rapids, 1952), p. 557.

Later Constantine's guards placed his body in a golden coffin which they brought to « the principal chamber of the imperial palace, » presumably the throne room, and there they guarded it. Constantine lay in state there and was surrounded with the same ceremonial as when alive, « the soldiers having resolved thus to guard the body until his sons should arrive, and take on themselves the conduct of their father's funeral. »¹² Meanwhile the tribunes of the *scholae* « selected from the troops under their command those officers whose fidelity and zeal had long been known to the emperor, » and sent them to Constantine's sons to inform them of their father's death.¹³

In this account it is strikingly clear that Constantine is regarded as standing *in loco parentis* with respect to his guards, and furthermore that they do not share this position with the « other soldiery, » officials, or citizens. Other passages in Eusebius support this view, as for example when he describes Constantine's supervision of the religious life of his court; deacons and other ministers supervised his « household, » and « his trusty bodyguard, strong in affection and fidelity to his person, found in their emperor an instructor in the practice of piety. »¹⁴ Perhaps the fatherly relationship assumed by Constantine was the result of his own personality and views. Licinius, for example, just before a decisive battle, addressed his chief officers and guards as « friends and fellow-soldiers. »¹⁵ Here the emperor's position is that of a comrade rather than a father. It is therefore pointless to press the passage in Eusebius too far. What is clear is that the emperor and his guards

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.67.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.68, tr. Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 557-558.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.18, tr. Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.5. It is noteworthy that this speech is preceded by a religious ceremony; among the pagan forces, too, the religious bond between the emperor and his *comitatus* was important.

were closely connected by a special bond; as suggested above, the best way to express this in modern terms is to say that the emperor's guards formed part of his « official family. » The origin of this relationship probably lay in that between a general and his staff (*officium*), as discussed in the second chapter.

It has in fact long been recognized that under the centralized monarchy of the Later Empire power was concentrated in the hands of the men around the emperor, the members of his *comitatus*. Ferdinand Lot has summed this up: « The 'functionaries,' civil and military, are more honoured, the nearer they are to the sacred person of the Emperor. »¹⁶ A corollary of this was that many of the emperor's confidants were dispatched on special missions and exercised their authority in the provinces. So many of Constantine's « companions » (*comites*), for example, were regularly far away from the palace that those who actually did remain at court were distinguished by special titles such as *comites intra palatium* and *comites domestici*.¹⁷ Similarly, a large proportion of the *domestici* were regularly on duty in the provinces as *deputati*.¹⁸

It is within this context that the imperial guards should be placed. They not only protected the emperor's person and palace, and at the same time enhanced his authority by providing a splendid background for court ceremonies, but they also served as agents of central control over the various military agencies in the provinces. They were also used to deal with special situations requiring direct action, such as the cases of Silvanus and St. John Chrysostom discussed above. Their regular use at Church councils was due to the fact that there was no regular ministry for ecclesiastical affairs and

¹⁶ F. Lot, *The End of the Ancient World*, tr. P. and M. Leon (New York, 1931), p. 86; cf. Jones (1), pp. 366-373, on the organization of the *comitatus*.

¹⁷ Jones (1), pp. 104-105.

¹⁸ Grosse, p. 141.

the emperor dealt with them directly through his own servants.

The guards were used as agents of central control primarily—we must suppose—because the emperor trusted them. They were bound to him by a special tie, apparent above all in religious matters as we have seen them. Another bit of evidence indicates that they did not guard the palace when the emperor was not actually in residence there; we are told that under Leo III the chamberlains of the palace were in danger of execution because they had allowed a general to enter the palace to gratify his curiosity while the Emperor was away.¹⁹ There is no reference to the *scholares* or *domestici* in the incident, presumably because they were attached to the emperor rather than to his palace. Even more significant in this connection is the swift rise in importance enjoyed by the new corps of *excubitores* in the fifth century, as discussed above, clearly because they had the emperor's confidence and therefore were considered more reliable agents of control. Justinian, for example, used them to supervise recruitment and even gave them the power to expel from the service soldiers whom they judged unsuitable.²⁰ This had been a task formerly entrusted to *protectores*. Here, as in many other respects, the *excubitores* stepped into the position of prominence formerly held by the *scholares*.²¹

This, and the documented fact that the *excubitores* numbered only 300, is an indication that the *scholares* on duty at the palace, including the *domestici*, did not number much more than 300 themselves. Other arguments have been presented which indicate that most guards performed their duties away from the palace. When this situation arose is not

¹⁹ Joh. Ant., frg. 208.

²⁰ Procopius, *HA* 24.8.

²¹ Grosse, pp. 270-271.

clear, and it may well have been after 395, when the emperors ceased to take the field.

In any case, the evidence indicates the continued importance of the *scholae*, even after the emperors ceased to play an active role militarily.²² They were used extensively in the provinces as agents of central control, and continued to be so used even when the *scholares* on duty in the capital fulfilled mainly ceremonial functions. Thus, when Theodoric was negotiating with Zeno, « he demanded that land be given on which he could stay and grain sufficient to keep his army until the harvest and that the emperor send the collectors of the imperial revenues (whom the Romans call *domestici*) as quickly as possible, to render an account of what the Goths had received. »²³

To sum up, the influence of the soldiers attached to the emperor's personal service was of central importance in the third and fourth centuries, and continued to be very great in the fifth and sixth. Zeno, whose great achievement it was to break the power of the *scholae*, did not attempt to create a new type of elite unit, only a new group of guards. He is even recorded as having appealed to the soldiers in his palace for their advice during negotiations with the Goths. « Now then, » Zeno said, « whatever opinion you yourselves hold about these matters, I want to hear from you. I have summoned you here for this purpose, for I know that those emperors act safely who share their councils with the soldiers. »²⁴

* * *

The central importance of the *scholae* and of the military in general under the Later Empire has a general significance

²² *Contra Grosse*, p. 95.

²³ Malchus, frg. 16; tr. C. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 166.

²⁴ Malchus, frg. 11; tr. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

which extends far beyond the mere description of Roman institutions. The fact that the Empire was reorganized on a military basis is a key to the Empire's fundamental character and weaknesses.

Forty years ago William Heitland concluded that the basic flaw in the system created by Augustus was the continuance of the local autonomy enjoyed by the various municipalities in Italy and the provinces. This system had been developed under the Republic by the upper classes to maintain their privileges, and its perpetuation by Augustus meant that power remained in the hands of a small aristocracy. Denied the advantages of a genuine consolidation, the Early Empire was no more than an « aggregate of municipalities » and never developed common institutions such as might have enabled the provincials to share in making policy and assuming responsibility. The result was disunity, particularism and a general inability to develop adequate policies and mobilize resources wisely to meet Empire-wide problems.²⁵

It was, in fact, the general inadequacy of imperial institutions which made necessary the sweeping reorganization of the third century. The result of this reorganization was the creation of a different type of state, a bureaucratic empire. In its institutional character, according to a theoretical analysis by S. Eisenstadt, the Later Empire resembled the Egyptian, Abbasid, Ottoman and European absolutist states. All were created by rulers who saw their policies blocked by tradition-bound groups and institutions. « They aimed to establish a more centralized, unified policy in which they could monopolize political decisions and the setting of political goals, without

²⁵ W. Heitland, *Last Words on the Roman Municipalities* (Cambridge, Eng., 1928), quote on p. 23. This restated and developed the thesis first presented in his work *The Roman Fate* (Cambridge, Eng., 1922). For a general evaluation emphasizing the conservative character of Augustus' settlement, see R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 319-320.

being bound by various traditional aristocratic, tribal or patrician groups. » Bureaucratic empires were characterized by centralization, rule by new, non-aristocratic classes, ruthless mobilization of resources, and eventually economic depletion. Since they were created by rulers who aimed to preserve traditional values, they were supported by the old aristocracies, whereas the lower classes became progressively more alienated and hostile.²⁶

This theoretical analysis seems to fit the Later Empire remarkably well. The creation of a new officer class and its continued dominance answered the need for a new ruling class, while its gradual approximation to the older aristocracy in attitudes and privileges confirms the basically conservative character of bureaucratic empires. Above all, the progressive alienation of the masses is explained by this analysis, and gives general significance to the bitter statement of Vegetius on the difficulty of recruiting decent soldiers in his day.²⁷

Eisenstadt mentions in passing that a characteristic of bureaucratic empires is that as they become more and more oppressive to the masses they rely more and more on foreign military groups.²⁸ This is in fact quite true for the Later Empire, especially from the reign of Constantine when barbarians formed the backbone of the *scholae* and could rise to the very top in the army. As discussed above, this marked a real break with earlier Roman traditions.

The prominence of barbarians in the *scholae* takes on added significance when viewed in the light of what we know of similar states. Eisenstadt included among bureaucratic empires the absolutist states of early modern Europe. Another

²⁶ S. N. Eisenstadt, "The Causes of Disintegration and Fall of Empires," *Diogenes* no. 34 (1961), pp. 82-107, quote on p. 88.

²⁷ Vegetius 1.7; cf. 1.8, recommending that draftees be tattooed so they may be easily recognized.

²⁸ Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

scholar, V. G. Kiernan, has in fact stressed the great importance in that period of elite military groups of mercenaries. They were used by the new monarchies in their drive to reform the political structure and control the feudal classes, « a reorganization—rather than a transformation—of the social structure of Europe. » Absolutist monarchs depended largely on troops who were foreign, not so much because they were from lands outside their domains as because they were from beyond feudal society, especially mountain areas such as Wales, Scotland, Sardinia, Albania and—above all—Switzerland.²⁹ There is a striking analogy here with the role of the Isaurians, who were within the Empire politically but not socially and economically because of their mountainous country. Similarly, the Rhineland Germans may also be considered a « fringe land people, » long affected by Roman traditions and respectful of them, but still essentially removed from the social conflicts of the Empire. Hence their usefulness to the rulers of the fourth century, who were determined to crush unrest and maintain traditional values even while reorganizing government. It is significant in this connection that Constantine, who relied so much on barbarians, also favored the senatorial aristocracy and gave them a larger role in government than they had enjoyed for many years.³⁰

These theories, therefore, seem to fit the Later Empire. It was indeed a bureaucratic regime, the result of a drive for political reorganization rather than social transformation, and in fact became progressively more alienated from the great mass of its subjects. Hence the central role of foreign soldiers in elite corps—above all, the *scholae*—and of the military elite in general. From the death of Julian on, supreme power passed

²⁹ V. G. Kiernan, "Foreign Mercenaries and Absolute Monarchy," *Past and Present* no. 11 (1957), pp. 66-86.

³⁰ Jones (1), pp. 105-107.

into the hands of this elite, as discussed above. The government of the Empire approximated what a political scientist has recently described as a special form of polity, praetorianism. Praetorian states, he says, are characterized by oligarchies which prevent unrest from gaining organization and so maintain political unity. Nevertheless, « these oligarchies as groups are weak, not strong, for they lack the unity to develop an order which can amply protect them. »³¹

Surely this description fits the situation of the Empire in the fifth century very well indeed, and suggests an important reason for its decline and fall. In the East a new reorganization staved off the danger, but in the West it was too late.

³¹ D. C. Rapoport, *Praetorianism: Government without Consensus* (unpublished dissertation, Berkeley, 1960), p. 276.

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